ESSAYS

ON THE

HISTORY OF MANKIND

IN

RUDE AND CULTIVATED AGES.

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PREFACE

TO ſolve ſome appearances in civil life, and, by an appeal to the annals of mankind, to vindicate the character of the ſpecies from vulgar prejudices, and thoſe of philoſophic theory, is the aim of the Volume now delivered to the Public. Its contents are digeſted on a regular plan; though the looſer form of Eſſays has been preferred to a more ſyſtematic arrangement.

He who attempts to reform the world is actuated by a wild enthuſiaſm, or by a divine impulſe. To ſtop the career of Vice, is the ultimate end of well-directed ambition. That ambition

ambition was felt by the great writers of antiquity. They erected a temple to Virtue, and exhausted on the opposite character all the thunder of eloquence.

Animated with the views, not with the genius of the ancients, I occupy the same ground; for on that ground the efforts of inferior men may be of use.

Every Author is a candidate for the public favour, and the Public alone is the arbiter of his fate. With such a sanction he will not need, and without it he ought to decline, even the patronage of kings.

The voice of the Public, like the voice of an oracle, it becomes an Author to hear with respectful silence.

Even while it mortifies, it inſtructs; while it refuſes approbation, it teaches wiſdom. It checks ambition in its wild career; and reminds the candidate for fame to return into that *deceiving path* of *life**, from which he ought not to have deviated, and which, how mortifying ſoever to the Author, is perhaps the happieſt for the Man.

Fallentis ſemita vit

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ERRATA.

Page 48, line 5. For *natural the*, read *the natural*.
Page 150, line 16. For *exhibited*, read *expected*.
Page 151, line 21. For *work*, read *waſte*.

ESSAYS

ON THE

HISTORY OF MANKIND.

ESSAY I.

ON THE PRIMEVAL FORM OF SOCIETY.

HUMAN Nature, in ſome reſpects, is ſo various and fluctuating; ſo altered, or ſo diſguiſed by external things, that its independent character has become dark and problematical. The hiſtory of its exertions in their primeval form, would reflect a *light* upon moral and political ſcience, which we endeavour in vain to

collect in the annals of poliſhed nations. What pity is it, that, the tranſactions of this early period being conſigned to eternal oblivion, hiſtory is neceſſarily defective in opening the ſcene of man!

Conſiſtently, however, with preſent appearances, and with the memorials of antiquity, the following changes, it is pretended, may have ariſen ſucceſſively to the ſpecies.

Firſt, Man may have ſubſiſted, in ſome ſort, like other animals, in a ſeparate and individual ſtate, before the date of language, or the commencement of any regular intercourſe.

Secondly, He may be contemplated in a higher ſtage; a proficient in language, and a member of that artleſs community which conſiſts with equality, with freedom, and independence.

Laſt

Laſt of all, by ſlow and imperceptible tranſitions, he ſubſiſts and flouriſhes under the protection and diſcipline of civil government. It is the deſign of this Eſſay to enquire into the principles which either ſuperſeded the firſt, or haſtened the ſecond ſtate; and led to an harmonious and ſocial correſpondence, antecedently to the æra of ſubordination, to the grand enterpriſes of art, to the inſtitution of laws, or any of the arrangements of nations. But it is the order of improvement merely, not the chronological order of the world, that belongs to this enquiry. Degeneracy, as well as improvement, is incident to man: and we are not here concerned with the original perfection of his nature, nor with the circumſtances wherein he was placed at the beginning by his Creator.

There is one general obſervation ſtrongly applicable, in all ages, to human nature: the appearance of proper objects is eſſential

to the exertion of its powers. As therefore there are talents belonging to individuals, which, for want of their objects, have lain for ever dormant; ſo perhaps there are talents inherent in the ſpecies which at no time have been called forth into action, and which may yet appear conſpicuous in ſome ſucceeding period. Any alteration in the human fabric would ſeem to affect the identity of our being; but from the novelty and variety of the objects with which it is converſant, the Soul of man may become progreſſive; and without undergoing any actual transformation in its powers, may open and expand itſelf in *energy* through the ſucceſſive periods of duration. The celebrated * diſtinctions of Ariſtotle will then appear to have an ample foundation in nature. Thus much is certain, a mutual intercourſe gradually opens latent powers; and the extenſion of this intercourſe is generally attended with new

* Ἐντελεχεια and Δυναμις.

exertions

exertions of intellect. Withdraw this intercourse, and what is man! "Let all the powers and elements of nature (says an illustrious philosopher) conspire to serve and obey one man: let the sun rise and set at his command: the sea and rivers roll as he pleases, and the earth furnish spontaneously whatever may be useful or agreeable to him; he will still be miserable till you give him some one person at least, with whom he may share his happiness, and whose esteem and friendship he may enjoy."

Society then is the theatre on which our genius expands with freedom. It is essential to the origin of all our ideas of natural and of moral beauty. It is the prime mover of all our inventive powers. Every effort, beyond what is merely animal, has a reference to a community; and the solitary savage, who traverses the desert, is scarce raised so far by nature above other animals,

as he is ſunk by fortune beneath the ſtandard of his own race.

The deſtitute condition of man, as an animal, has been an uſual topic of declamation among the learned; and this alone, according to ſome theories, is the foundation both of ſocial union and of civil combinations.

After the population of the world, and the growth of arts, mutual alliances and mutual ſupport became indeed eſſential in our divided ſyſtem: and it is no wonder if certain appearances in the civil æra have been transferred, in imagination, to all preceding times. At firſt, however, it may be queſtioned, whether there reigned not ſuch an independence in our œconomy, as is obſervable in other parts of the creation.

It is the arts of life which, by enervating our corporeal powers, and multiplying the objects of deſire, have annihilated perſonal

ſonal independence, and formed an immenſe chain of connexions among collective bodies. Nor is it perhaps ſo much the call of neceſſity, or mutual wants, as a certain delight in their kind congenial with all natures, which conſtitutes the fundamental principle of aſſociation and harmony throughout the whole circle of being. But man, it is pretended, by *nature* timid, runs to *ſociety* for relief; and finds an aſylum there. Nor is he ſingular in this: all animals in the hour of danger crowd together, and derive confidence and ſecurity from mutual aid.

Danger, however, it may be anſwered, far from ſuggeſting a confederacy, tends in moſt caſes to diſſolve rather than to confirm the union. Secure from danger, animals herd together, and ſeem to diſcover a complacency towards their kind. Let but a ſingle animal of more rapacious form preſent himſelf to view, they inſtantly diſperſe;

they derive no ſecurity from mutual aid, and rarely attempt to ſupply their weakneſs in detail, by their collective ſtrength. This ſingle animal is a match for thouſands of a milder race. The law of dominion in the ſcale of life is the ſtrength of the individual merely, not the number of the tribe; and of all animals, man almoſt alone becomes conſiderable by the combination of his ſpecies.

In ſociety, animals are rather more prone to timidity from the prevalence of the ſofter inſtincts. Thoſe of the ravenous claſs, generally the moſt ſolitary, are accordingly the moſt courageous; and man himſelf declines in courage in proportion to the extent of his alliances: not indeed in that ſpecies of it which is the genuine offspring of magnanimity and heroic ſentiment; but in that conſtitutional boldneſs and temerity which reſides, if I may ſay ſo, in our animal nature. Hence intrepidity is a predominant

nant feature in the ſavage character: hence the ſavage himſelf, ſeparately bold and undaunted, when he acts in concert with his fellows is found liable to panic from this public ſympathy, this reciprocal colliſion of minds. And it is hence, perhaps, according to the obſervation of a diſtinguiſhed writer [A], that the moſt ſignal victories recorded in the annals of nations have been uniformly obtained by the army of inferior number.

But to return to the analogy of animals: I am not ignorant that ſome are gregarious from neceſſity, are formed for offenſive or defenſive wars, and require joint labour for their ſubſiſtence or accommodation. Yet in ſuch examples the common functions are directed by inſtinct rather than by art; and evidence leſs the policy of the animal, than, if I may call it ſo, the policy of nature. When theſe provinces [B] are well defined, many of

of the appearances we ſo much admire will no longer be regarded as marks of invention, or concerted plan. Where there is no option, there is no agency; and within a contracted ſphere, while ſeparate acts of ſagacity in various tribes are ſo often obſervable, their concurring efforts are comparatively rare. Each creature below us is conſtituted the ſole guardian of its own privileges, ſeems, as it were, a ſeparate ſyſtem, and the reſources of its own conſtitution its natural and its only ſupport. Even the union of the ſexes, formed for the continuance of the kind, is a temporary union, and diſſolves at the inſtant when its operations are no longer neceſſary. As for larger conventions, they are often purely caſual; and the invitation of the ſame paſture will at times ſolve ſuch appearances, without reſorting to the ties either of dependence or of love. It is thus the fowls of the air alight ſo often on the ſame field. Thus the

ravens

ravens and other creatures of prey convene around the body of a dead animal. And thus the inſect tribes are wont to aſſemble on the ſame putrefaction in ſuch amazing ſwarms, that naturaliſts have been ſeduced, by the appearance, into the belief of an equivocal generation, as if theſe inſects were actually produced from the maſs of corruption on which they feed.

An opinion of intercourſe in the lower ranks of being is often ſuggeſted or favoured by a propenſity there is in man, to confer on every creature a portion of his own nature. Suitable to this propenſity, in obſerving a concourſe of animals, however fortuitous, he magnifies every appearance in favour of the ſocial principle, and preſumes a concert and government where none in reality ſubſiſt. It is the ſame propenſity which gives life to inanimate objects, and leads us ſo irreſiſtibly, on ſome occaſions, to conſider them as active and percipient

cipient beings. Withdraw the aid of imagination, and the embelliſhments of fiction, and much of that intercourſe is deſtroyed, which we preſume to reign in many departments of the animal world.

Yet if urgent neceſſity did not produce a ſeparation, it is probable that the love of herding would be univerſal. Animals, accordingly, that are ſolitary in one country, are gregarious in another. Even the antipathies among different tribes neceſſity often creates. For in ſome regions of the globe, where that neceſſity does not ſubſiſt, animals of prey ſuſpend their hoſtilities; and tribes, uſually accounted the moſt implacable by nature, fulfil, in harmony, their peculiar deſtinations, without encroaching on each other's happineſs or ſecurity [C].

Upon the whole, we may pronounce that intereſted intercourſe in the animal

kingdom, is greater in appearance than in reality; that the concourſe of a tribe is often accidental; that all regular œconomy is under the direction of inſtinct; and that in all the freer combinations, the ſociety is held together by the tie of affection or conſcious delight, more than by fear, or mutual wants, or any neceſſary call of nature.

Such is the conſtitution of the inferior creation. Is the ſame analogy obſerved in man? Was he ever in this independent and individual ſtate? Or wherein does his pre-eminence conſiſt? Not, ſurely, in the mechaniſm of thoſe inſtincts which direct him to procure ſubſiſtence. The ſenſes of other animals are as acute as his. Not in achievements by bodily ſtrength. For, in that particular, many of them far ſurpaſs him. Not in performing *jointly*, what ſo many other creatures can perform apart.

Mani-

Manifeſtly, that would be no perfection. But in this his pre-eminence conſiſts, that being as independent as they in all the corporeal functions, impelled by no neceſſity, but by generous paſſions, he riſes to improvements which flow from the union of his kind.

In ſome parts of our conſtitution, it cannot be denied, we reſemble the other animals. If therefore a time was when thoſe parts chiefly or alone were exerciſed, our objects, and purſuits, and habits of living muſt have been nearly ſimilar. I am far from affirming that ever there was no diſtinction. At all times, in our walk, there is ſome nobler aim. There is ſome inward conſciouſneſs, ſome deciſive mark of ſuperiority in every condition of men. But the line which meaſures that ſuperiority is of very variable extent. Let us allow but equal advantages from culture

culture to the mind and body; and it is conſequential to infer, that ſavages, in ſome of the wilder forms, muſt be as inferior to civilized man in intellectual abilities, and in the peculiar graces of the mind, as they ſurpaſs him in the activity of their limbs, in the command of their bodies, and in the exertion of all the meaner functions. Some ſtriking inſtances of ſavage tribes with ſo limited an underſtanding, as is ſcarce capable of forming any arrangement for futurity, are produced by an Hiſtorian who traces the progreſs of human reaſon through various ſtages of improvement, and unites truth with eloquence in his deſcriptions of mankind *.

In ſome corners of the globe, if we may credit reports, man and beaſt lead in the foreſt a ſort of promiſcuous life; and the boundary is ſcarce diſcernible which divides

* Hiſtory of America, v. i. p. 309.

the rational from the animal world. This fact, no doubt magnified by travellers and hiſtorians, and tortured in the theories of philoſophy, has however ſome foundation, and is in part conſonant to our own experience. The progreſs of nations and of men, though not exactly parallel, is found in ſeveral reſpects to correſpond: and in the interval from infancy to manhood, we may remark this gradual opening of the human faculties. Firſt of all, thoſe of ſenſe appear, grow up ſpontaneouſly, or require but little culture. Next in order, the propenſities of the heart diſplay their force; a fellow-feeling with others unfolds itſelf gradually on the appearance of proper objects; for man becomes ſociable long before he is a rational being. Laſt in the train, the powers of intellect begin to bloſſom, are reared up by culture, and demand an intercourſe of minds.

When

When we obſerve, then, this analogy between the individual and the ſpecies; when we obſerve the gradation of improvement, and the ſlow departure of man from the confines of animal life; is there no intimation here concerning his original ſtate, or rather concerning that ſtate which human nature uninformed, and unenlightened by providence, muſt have at firſt aſſumed? When arts and dependence grow together, and ſubſiſt ſo nearly in the ſame proportion, ought we not to regard them in the relation of cauſe and effect, and conſequently allow of little or no dependence before the birth of arts? But the arts are formed in the boſom of ſociety. Society therefore had another origin than mutual dependence and mutual wants. It is not, if I may ſay ſo, the ſickly daughter of calamity, nor even the production of an aſpiring underſtanding, but the free and legitimate offspring of the human heart.

Yet

Yet the attempt were vain to refer the origin of large communities to domeſtic relation and the ties of blood.

That *natural affection* * which belongs to man belongs alſo to the inferior claſſes, and ſubſiſts among them with equal vigour. In both, the mechaniſm is the ſame, and calculated with the ſame deſign. At firſt therefore, perhaps, it was proportioned to the exigency of things, and as in them, ſo in us likewiſe, of limited duration. The period of *geſtation*, in animals, is ſo contrived as to prevent all poſſibility of incumbrance from a ſecond brood. But the period of *pregnancy*, it is allowed, were by far too ſhort to diſpenſe, in the human ſpecies, with the parental cares. The connexion, therefore, is neceſſarily more durable, its functions more various and progreſſive, and ſuited to the different ages and circumſtances of a connected and riſing progeny. Yet the im-

provements of ſocial life, by the introduction of order, and by refining on all the paſſions and feelings of our frame, have given to this inſtinct a perpetuity unknown in the primeval ſtate.

Prior to ſingle marriages, and the more accurate aſcertainment of families, an uncertainty with regard to the progeny muſt have often ſuppreſſed the inſtinct in the breaſt of the one parent; and in the breaſt of the other parent, the equal licence of both tended ultimately to its extinction or decay. It is obſervable, even in our own times, that the affections of a woman, mother to ſeveral diſtinct families, are exceedingly liable to be eſtranged from the children of a former bed [*D*]. This remark on the female character is at leaſt as ancient as Homer.

Even Ulyſſes's queen was not preſumed exempt from a frailty ſo natural to her

ſex. The young prince of Ithaca is accordingly warned by Minerva to return home, before abſence and new engagements had eſtranged the heart of Penelope from the ſon of Ulyſſes.

"Thou know'ſt the practice of the female train,
"Loſt in the children of the preſent ſpouſe,
"They ſlight the pledges of their former vows;
"Their love is always with the lover paſt,
"Still the ſucceeding flame expels the laſt."

Odyſſey, B. xv. v. 24.

Is love then at firſt devoted to a ſingle object? Is ſuch abſolute confinement of appetite a maxim of uninſtructed nature? The ſuppoſition, though it were not repugnant to every mode of appetite, and to the wilder range of life, is irreconcileable with the hiſtory of the ruder ages. Some latitude, in this reſpect, is almoſt univerſal after ſociety has received a form; and by

degrees only is eſtabliſhed that ſtricter rule which is ſo often violated, when connected with the moral harmony of the world, and guarded by the ſanctions of divine and human laws [*E*]. The intereſt of a family, the order of ſociety, juſtifies the reſtraint. Even the amorous paſſion, when aſſociated with moral ſentiment, leads to an excluſive and indiſſoluble union; and the ſweets of domeſtic life make ample amends for its moſt ſevere engagements. But this adjuſtment of things ſeems to be an improvement, or refinement on the firſt œconomy; owing its original either directly to divine command, or to the wiſdom of human policy.

In ſome rude countries, according to the information of modern travellers, rendered credible by ſeveral paſſages of antiquity, the women are not only at the head of domeſtic government, but poſſeſs a voice

and aſcendency in public councils and deliberations [*F*].

Here then is probably diſplayed a peculiar and ſtriking effect of gratitude and natural authority; and the weaker ſex, though deſtined in the intermediate ages of barbariſm to the moſt deplorable ſubjection, have derived from the love and reverence of children, who know no other parent, a rank and conſideration ſuperior to what the rules of gallantry or generoſity preſcribe among the moſt refined nations.

On the commencement of domeſtic order, filial reverence, one of the ſtrongeſt ſentiments that can touch the heart, fails not to recognize its object, and acts with redoubled vigour when accumulated in one direction. A variety of circumſtances augments its force; and that natural love which

which ſeems not, in any other ſpecies, to aſcend from the young to the parent, aſcends in ours with the firſt dawnings of reaſon and morality, and forms a diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of human kind.

But as, in ſuch inſtances, the *paternal* inſtincts are of more precarious exertion, at an æra further back, the *maternal* inſtincts likewiſe may have been conſtituted in circumſtances which render them fluctuating and temporary.

It is not then ſuch partial principles which could have formed or embodied the larger communities of mankind. It is not a parent, a child, or a brother, but the ſpecies itſelf, that is the object embraced by humanity. In ſome caſes, perhaps, the patriarchal government may have furniſhed the model of a larger plan; but mankind were before in poſſeſſion of the ſweets of an independent ſociety. The mem-

bers of a family became members of this ſociety, before they became members of a ſtate. A thouſand circumſtances in the range of being, convening numbers of the ſpecies on the ſame ſtage, muſt have preſented the opportunities of ſocial life. The only queſtion is, how regular intercourſe was formed, how ſtrangers were converted into acquaintance, and how thoſe who came together at firſt by accident came afterwards to aſſemble by appointment.

With ſimilar appetites and congenial paſſions, the excurſions of individuals will often coincide. They will be found occaſionally on the banks of the ſame river, or in the ſame corner of the grove. The reiterated appearance of the objects ſlowly and imperceptibly calls forth new deſires. Each interview has its effect. The brutality of the ſavage begins to vaniſh. Some refinement appears. An appetite for ſociety ripens, which afterwards muſt be gratified

gratified as well as other appetites. Little plans are carried on in concert; and at a time when no diſcordant intereſts, or various purſuits, had diverſified the ſcene, a ſmall community might be kept together by the tie of ſociability and reciprocal love.

In theſe days of envy, and of intereſt, we are little able to conceive its force; nor, if the feelings remained, could artificial language, in this reſpect, ſupply the language of nature. When ſimilar functions and occupations in civil ſociety prove ſo often a bond of union among thoſe of the ſame order, how immenſe muſt have been the effect of an exact conformity of life! That reſemblance of diſpoſition and of character, which is the cement of little aſſociations, and is the principle of private friendſhip, was the original baſis of public union. The hiſtory of the Solduri in Gaul, of the ancient Germans, and of other public bodies, whereof there are ſo many examples

examples in the ſimple ages, evidences the ſtability of thoſe ſacred bonds and confederacies that originate in the heart. The hiſtory too of ſome of the South Sea iſles, which the late voyages of diſcovery have tended to diſcloſe, enables us to glance at ſociety in ſome of its earlier forms, and to mark, in ſome ſtriking examples, the inviolable fidelity of ſocial love.

The principles of union are, in the order of things, prior to the principles of hoſtility. The former are, in truth, productive of the latter, which, in a more advanced period, burſting forth, like a torrent, againſt other tribes, diſfigures the character of uncivilized nations.

The affections of the heart are of limited exertion; and that mutual love, which is confined within a narrow ſphere, triumphs, as it were, over the ſentiment which gave

it

it birth, and creates, in a competition of intereſts, ſuch fierce animoſity among contending tribes.

As emigrants in rude ages uſually paſs their own frontiers with hoſtile minds, they are regarded by others with a jealous eye; and in the penury of language, a *ſtranger* and an *enemy* may receive one common name. It was thus the ancient Romans, addicted to piracy and war, and conſequently jealous of the deſigns of others, uſed the ſame term in both theſe ſenſes; for this is more probable far, according to the obſervation of an ingenious modern, than the ſolution of *Tully*, who takes occaſion, from this coincidence, to extol the humanity of his anceſtors. But ſuch criticiſms affect not the general hiſtory of rude nations. When there is no ground of variance, the original ſentiment revives in all its force, the rights of hoſpitality

hoſpitality are peculiarly revered, and an unſuſpected ſtranger is embraced with a fondneſs and cordiality which redeems the character of the ſpecies.

Thus have we reached that univerſal principle which reigns, in ſome degree, in every diſtrict of nature. The moſt rapacious of animals confeſs its power; and, while at war with the reſt of the creation, ſympathize with each other, and refuſe to taſte the blood of any of their own kind. This harmony of things, ſo conſpicuous in the inferior orders of life, ſeems to affront the conduct of the rational ſpecies. Moraliſts and poets have availed themſelves of this topic, and inveigh with indignant ſpirit againſt that proſtitution of ſentiment, which, forming an exception to a law almoſt univerſal, requires the effuſion of human blood. Thus the Roman poet expoſtulates

poſtulates with a degenerate age in theſe admirable lines:

——Quando leoni
Fortior eripuit vitam leo? quo nemore unquam
Expiravit aper majoris dentibus apri?
Indica tigris agit rabida cum tigride pacem
Perpetuam: ſævis inter ſe convenit urſis.
Aſt homini——

Juv. Sat. xv. lib. 5.

Such reproaches indeed are chargeable on mankind; but touch not the clear dictates of morality, nor the primeval rectitude of the heart.

The great lines of humanity are legible in all communities, and it is the deſcription of every country under heaven.

——Sunt hic etiam ſua præmia laudi;
Sunt lachrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt.

The love of the ſpecies is the grand principle of attraction, as eſſential to the rational,

rational, and, in ſome degree, to the animal, as gravitation to the material world: nor wilder were the attempt to expound the harmony of the ſolar ſyſtem from the limited attraction of magnetiſm, than to expound the combination of tribes, and the moral harmony of nations, from the operation of partial inſtincts. Even pride, the paſſion which divides mankind, was originally a principle of union. It was a ſenſe of the dignity of the ſpecies, not an opinion of ſuperiority among individuals; and with exalted notions of their own rank, they reſerved for the inferior creatures that ſovereign contempt which they can now beſtow ſo liberally on their fellow men.

In ſuch circumſtances it was impoſſible for mankind not to meditate, from the beginning, a ſeparation from the life of brutes. They muſt have conceived the plan of holding the dominion of the world;

and

and actuated with a decent pride, the conſciouſneſs of their own pre-eminence, they became daily more and more ſuſceptible of reaſon, of morality, and of religion. Thus are the foundations laid, upon which were afterwards reared, by ſlow advances, the ſuperſtructure of policy and arts. In ſociety the faculties have an object. The ſprings of ingenuity are put into motion; and the language of nature gradually participates of art. The efforts of genius excite admiration. The acquiſitions of induſtry, or invention, confer a right which ſuggeſts the idea of property; and the diſtinctions of natural talents lay a foundation for correſponding diſtinctions in ſociety.

But theſe inventions and improvements, which do honour to our nature, tended at the ſame time to divide mankind. On this account it may be queſtioned, whether the enlargement of our faculties, and all the

advantages from arts, counterbalance the feuds and animoſities which they ſoon introduced into the world. The ſerene and joyous interval between the rudeneſs of mere animal life, and the diſſenſions of civil ſociety, conſtituted, perhaps, that ſhort but happy period, to which antiquity refers in her deſcriptions of the golden age.

No theory, indeed, in morals, or in government, was then deviſed. Yet moral rules were ſeldom broken, when an equal and generous commerce was the rule of government. And it is amuſing to obſerve into what abſurdities ſpeculative men have been ſo often carried upon theſe ſubjects by preſumption, by affectation, or by the love of paradox.

Hence a variety of theories, ancient and modern, concerning the origin of moral ſentiment.

Epicurus

Epicurus obſerving the external advantages reſulting to the individual from moral conduct, purſued the idea ſo far as to allow ſuperior advantages, and pleaſures of a higher reliſh, altogether to eſcape his notice. It is indeed ſtrange that any obſerver ſhould omit this obvious comment on human life, That to be the object of love, of eſteem, and of reſpect, is in itſelf far more deſirable than all the conſequences with regard to external eaſe and ſecurity that can be derived from that fountain. But Epicurus could contemplate beauty neither in nature nor in man. And what better could be expected from the philoſopher who had aſcribed the origin of worlds to a fortuitous concourſe of atoms?

A Writer of the laſt age, in the compoſition of a philoſophical romance, is ſtill more extravagant.

All virtue, according to him, consists in obedience to the public magistrate; and all moral obligations are the offspring of civil government.

But has government, it may be asked, any creative power? Or whence the duty of allegiance, if there was no primeval law? Would not Amphion and Orpheus have strung their lyres in vain?

It is no wonder that the same writer should arraign the genius of the ancient republics, and condemn to the flames all Greek and Roman learning as a sovereign expedient for strengthening the hands of government.

But I am not called upon, by my subject, to explain or to refute such systems. And I shall content myself with observing, that a late publication, much read and admired in our fashionable world, is more

dangerous than any ſpeculative theory to the morals of the riſing generation. As patrons of licentiouſneſs, Epicurus and Hobbes, and even Machiavel and Mandeville, muſt bow to the noble author.

It is in the ſpirit of his performance to ſeparate the *honeſtum* from the *decorum* of life; to inſult whatever is venerable in domeſtic alliance; to ſubſtitute artificial manners in the room of the natural; to raiſe ſuperficial above ſolid accompliſhment, and to hold up diſſimulation and impoſture as the eſſentials of character.

This is a ſpecies of refinement avowed in no former age. It contains a ſolecism in education, and in the œconomy of civil affairs.

To exalt the *Graces* above Virtue, is, if I may ſay ſo, to exalt creatures above their Creator. The *Graces* are chiefly amiable as emblems of Virtue. Break this alliance,

and they are no more. Unite them with the oppoſite character, and this fantaſtical conjunction renders a monſter ſtill more deformed. For my own part, I had as ſoon behold the monſter itſelf in all the horrors of its native deformity, as in ſuch inſolent attire.

The *Graces* are the handmaids of Virtue, not the ſovereigns; and all their honours are derived. But Virtue, though naked and unadorned, were Virtue ſtill.

> Quam ardentes amores non excitaret ſui, ſi videretur!

How different was the conduct of a Roman ſtateſman, when, in the perſon of a father, he delivered inſtructions to youth! The inſtructions of the Roman fill the young with rapture. Thoſe of the Briton excite indignation in the aged. But I aſk pardon of the reader, when I name the Britiſh author in the ſame breath with

Cicero.

Cicero. And if the ſyſtem of the noble lord was deſigned merely for the courtier, with the courtier let it reſt. Without the formality of ſyſtem, the ſtrict obſervance of moral rules is diſpenſed with in the negociations of courts.

Let it be numbered then among courtly privileges to patronize deceit. When perfidy and diſſimulation are declared by patent to belong to the members of the diplomatic body, they will become, perhaps, more emphatically, the repreſentatives of kings.

But while things are thus adjuſted to the meridian of courts; while the *civil code*, in many countries, is no more than the breath of kings; and, in all countries, may be diſſolved by legiſlative power; the *moral code*, which is paramount to all civil authority, and from which all civil obligations ariſe, remains eternally in force.

It was delivered from heaven to the people, and to maintain its authority is the *jus divinum* of nations.

With theſe ſentiments I cloſe the Eſſay: and ſuch ſentiments are addreſſed more particularly to the Britiſh youth by one of their public guardians, who then only feels the full importance of his ſtation when he animates the riſing generation in the purſuits of honour.

NOTES.

NOTE [A], p. 9.

SIR William Temple, in an Eſſay on Heroic Virtue, deſcends into the following detail, which, on account of its importance, I lay before my Readers, in the words of that intelligent and agreeable Writer.

" The ſecond obſervation I ſhall make upon " the ſubject of victory and conqueſt is, that " they have in general been made by the ſmaller " numbers over the greater; againſt which I " do not remember any exception in all the " famous battles regiſtered in ſtory, excepting " that of Tamerlane and Bajazet, whereof the " firſt is ſaid to have exceeded about a fourth " part in number, though they were ſo vaſt on " both ſides that they were not very eaſy to be " well accounted. For the reſt, the numbers " of the Perſians with Cyrus were ſmall to " thoſe of the Aſſyrians: thoſe of the Mace-

" donians were in no battle againſt the Perſians
" above forty thouſand men, though ſome-
" times againſt three, four, or ſix hundred
" thouſand.

" The Athenian army little exceeded ten
" thouſand, and fighting for the liberties of
" their country, beat above ſix ſcore thouſand
" Perſians at Marathon.

" The Lacedemonians, in all the famous
" exploits of that ſtate, never had above twelve
" thouſand Spartans in the field at a time, and
" ſeldom above twenty thouſand men with their
" allies.

" The Romans ever fought with ſmaller
" againſt greater numbers, unleſs in the battles
" of Cannæ and Thraſymene, which were the
" only famous ones they loſt againſt foreign
" enemies; and Cæſar's army at Pharſalia, as
" well as in Gaul and Germany, were in no
" proportion to thoſe he conquered. That of
" Marius was not above forty thouſand againſt
" three hundred thouſand Cimbers. The famous
" victories of Ætius and Beliſarius againſt the
" barbarous northern nations were with mighty
" diſproportion of numbers, as likewiſe the firſt

" victories

"victories of the Turks upon the Perſian king-
"dom; of the Tartars upon the Chineſe: and
"Scanderbeg never ſaw together above ſixteen
"thouſand men in all the renowned victories
"he achieved againſt the Turks, though in
"number ſometimes above a hundred thou-
"ſand.

"To deſcend to later times, the Engliſh
"victories ſo renowned at Creſſy, and Poictiers,
"and Agincourt, were gained with diſadvan-
"tages of numbers out of all proportion. The
"great achievements of Charles VIII. in Italy,
"of Henry IV. in France, and of Guſtavus
"Adolphus in Germany, were ever performed
"with ſmaller againſt greater numbers; and
"among all the exploits which have ſo juſtly
"raiſed the reputation and honour of Monſ.
"Turenne for the greateſt Captain in his time,
"I do not remember any of them were achieved
"without diſadvantage of number; and the
"late defeat of the Turks at the ſiege of
"Vienna, which ſaved Chriſtendom, and has
"eternized the memory of the duke of Lor-
"raine, was too freſh and great an example of
"this aſſertion to need any more, or leave it in
"diſpute." Upon theſe inconteſtible facts the argument proceeds thus: "If it be true, which

"I think

"I think will not be denied, that the battle is "loſt where the fright firſt enters, then the "reaſon will appear why victory has generally "followed the ſmaller numbers; becauſe, in a "body compoſed of more parts, it may ſooner "enter upon one than in that which conſiſts of "fewer, as likelier to find ten wiſe men toge-"ther, than an hundred, and an hundred fear-"leſs men than a thouſand. And thoſe who "have the ſmaller forces endeavour moſt to "ſupply that defect by the choice diſcipline "and bravery of their troops; and where the "fright once enters an army, the greater the "number the greater the diſorder, and thereby "the loſs of the battle more certain and "ſudden."

The truth of the above might be illuſtrated by more recent examples, and a more copious induction. The obſervation, ſince our Author's time, is confirmed by the experience of another century. In the memorable battle of Plaſſy, the Engliſh army under Lord Clive defeated an enemy which outnumbered them ten to one.

The King of Pruſſia's battles in the laſt war would form a ſeries of ſplendid examples in ſupport of the ſame concluſion, if the ſuperior abilities

abilities of that great Prince were not alone ſufficient to account for his ſuperiority in arms.

But the facts above ſpecified are fully ſufficient for the aſcertainment of ſo curious a phænomenon, on the cauſes of which our Author has deſcanted with ſo much ability.

NOTE [*B*], p. 9.

THERE are certain principles in the conſtitution both of men and animals, which lead blindly, and irreſiſtibly to unknown ends. To theſe we give the name of *inſtinct*; and to define its exertions in all their variety and extent, forms one of the niceſt queſtions in philoſophy. The province of *reaſon* having been confined to abſtract concluſions, it has been doubted whether it belongs at all to animals; and habits and inſtincts have been deemed ſufficient to account for their whole œconomy. Jealous of our prerogative, we would not have inferior creatures to claim, in this particular, any kindred with the human mind.

It is however certain, that animals are capable of recollection, and of foreſight; and by conſequence poſſeſs the faculty which infers the future

future from the paſt. Many of them too diſcover an inventive faculty; and when drawn into artificial circumſtances beyond their uſual tract of life, extricate themſelves with an addreſs and ſagacity that would be deemed rational in man. Admitting then to animals ſome degree of reaſon, as well as inſtinct, it is of importance to define their reſpective functions.

It is one criterion of *inſtinct* to be uniform in its proceedings: *reaſon* is various, and ſuppoſes a choice. The one principle, as far as it extends, is infallible in its determinations; but the other principle is liable to error. The one acquires maturity at once, and ſuperſedes experience, and is incapable of culture. The other is guided by experience, and ſtands in need of culture, and arrives gradually at different ſtages of perfection.

Inſtinct is fixed and immutable, not in the fabric only of a ſingle animal; the ſame exertions of it are common to the ſpecies. But *reaſon*, which becomes more or leſs perfect in the ſame individual, is dealt out in various meaſure and proportion to the ſeveral individuals of the kind.

Theſe

Theſe principles ſeem counterparts to each other in the ſyſtem of creation. In proportion as the one is denied, the other comes in aid of the defect.

The perfection of reaſon would ſuperſede the neceſſity of inſtinct; but its imperfection calls aloud for this auxiliary.

Inſtinct accordingly is, in the human ſpecies, more conſpicuous in infancy than in manhood; and reigns moſt abſolutely in all the meaner departments of animal life. The fowls of the air, the fiſhes of the ſea, and the inſect tribes, ſeem wiſer, in this reſpect, than *he* who ſtyles himſelf Lord of the Creation.

But is this the wiſdom of the animal? It is rather the wiſdom of nature.

———Hinc ille avium concentus in agris,
Et lætæ pecudes, & ovantes gutture corvi.

Nature has drawn a veil over this part of her proceedings, and that veil what mortal can remove? At leaſt ſure I am, I may apply to my own ſpeculations on this myſterious theme what the poet Simonides, when revolving on the

the nature of the gods, obſerved to the King of Syracuſe,

Quanto diutius conſidero, tanto mihi res videtur
foſcurior.

NOTE [C], p. 12.

A Navigator, whoſe preſent voyage, we hope, for the honour of civilized nations, will not be diſturbed by the preſent hoſtilities, thus deſcribes, in a former voyage, the condition of animals on a ſequeſtered iſland, near Staten-land in the South Sea.

"It is amazing to ſee how the different ani-
"mals which inhabit this little ſpot are mutually
"reconciled. They ſeem to have entered into
"a league not to diſturb each others tranquil-
"lity. The ſea-lions occupy moſt of the ſea-
"coaſt; the ſea-bears take up their abode in
"the iſle; the ſhags have poſt in the higheſt
"cliffs; the penguins fix their quarters where is
"the moſt eaſy communication to and from the
"ſea; and the other birds chuſe more retired
"places. We have ſeen all theſe animals mix
"together, like domeſtic cattle and poultry in
"a farm yard, without one attempting to moleſt
"the

" the other. Nay, I have often obſerved the
" eagles and vultures ſitting in the hillocks
" among the ſhags, without the latter, either
" young or old, being diſturbed at their pre-
" ſence. It may be aſked how theſe birds of
" prey live? I ſuppoſe on the carcaſes of ſeals,
" and birds which die by various cauſes; and
" probably not a few, as they are ſo nume-
" rous."

A Voyage towards the South Pole, &c.
By James Cooke. Vol. ii. p. 206.

NOTE [*D*], p. 19.

IT is the tendency of a ſecond marriage to weaken the ties of filial, as of parental love: and this effect is by far more conſpicuous in the ſecond marriage of a mother than of a father; a circumſtance which ſuggeſts a curious queſtion in the theory of moral ſentiment, an ingenious ſolution of which may be ſeen in the philoſophy of Hume.

Treatiſe of Hum. Nat. v. ii. p. 140.

NOTE

NOTE [*E*], p. 21.

THE plan of domeſtic ſociety is various in different ages and nations. In different climates and ſituations it becomes more or leſs expedient to controul the love of variety, and natural the licentiouſneſs of deſire.

A community of wives was allowed in Sparta. A latitude of the ſame kind was indulged at Rome. Such communities were found eſtabliſhed among the ancient Britons, and take place among various tribes of Barbarians. In other caſes, the irkſome ſituation of fathers under an impreſſion of a dubious progeny has led to a ſyſtem of reſtraint, and prevention no leſs barbarous than inhuman. Some nations, diſtruſtful of all the moral guardians of female virtue, prevent by phyſical expedients the poſſibility of tranſgreſſion. The modern Arabians in particular, among whom jealouſy is the reigning paſſion, are guilty of a ſpecies of violence too ſhocking for deſcription.

Polygamy,

Polygamy however, in ſome form or other, appears to have been almoſt univerſal. The moderation indeed of the ancient Germans is mentioned by Tacitus; yet among them a plurality of *wives* was not without example. Even a plurality of *huſbands*, according to Strabo, took place in certain provinces of the Medean empire: and ſuch plurality is recognized in the Gentoo code.

The abolition therefore of polygamy has been repreſented by ſome writers as a ſort of ſumptuary law, founded on the exigencies of civil ſociety.

But againſt one ſpecies of polygamy the want of the aſcertainment of the father forms an inſuperable objection. Nor is it by any means clear that polygamy, in its more admiſſible form, and how well ſoever regulated, is conducive to population or public proſperity; and the near equality in the number of each ſex, ſufficiently arraigns the juſtice of this eſtabliſhment. Where that proportion ſubſiſts, a community of wives, though deſervedly exploded as tending to relax or to annihilate the paternal tie, is, perhaps, more defenſible than the excluſive poſſeſſion of a plurality. But ſhould the proportion be in-

terrupted or broken by peſtilence, by war, or other ſignal calamity, a well ordered polygamy might poſſibly ſerve as a temporary expedient for repairing the depopulation of mankind.

On ſuch emergency it was allowed at Athens; and from a conviction, no doubt, of its propriety, Socrates and Euripides availed themſelves of the indulgence. But ſuch conjunctures are rare; and an excluſive polygamy muſt in general be regarded in a leſs favourable light, as the moſt dangerous monopoly that ever claimed the protection of government, and in its origin and progreſs as an uſurpation of the powerful and opulent on the equal pretenſions of mankind.

Perhaps the liberty of *divorce* tended, at leaſt in the more temperate climates, to reconcile all ranks to a more equal plan.

The inſtitution of *ſingle marriages* accordingly was in Greece as ancient as Cecrops, and was adopted by the Romans as the moſt perfect plan of domeſtic life. Yet even under this inſtitution, the perpetuity of the marriage-union may be vindicated on ſolid grounds: and a riſing progeny, the offſpring of mutual love,

tends to consolidate the alliance, as well as to render its obligations indissoluble. It is accordingly remarkable, that divorces, though permitted by law, were, during a period of five hundred years, unprecedented in the annals of Rome.

It is no less remarkable, according to the observation of a learned prelate *, that the number of divorces in the present reign equals the accumulated number upon record, in all preceding reigns, in the annals of England.

This decline of public manners is surely alarming, and calls, perhaps, for the interposition of legislative power. But it is seldom in the power of government to mend the morals of a people, while ill digested attempts may serve rather to hasten corruption.

Whether it is possible for the wisdom of a British Parliament, to recal, in our age, the dignity of domestic life, I pretend not to decide. Let it suffice to observe that, in the dissolute ages of antiquity, this liberty of divorce, authorized on so slight pretences by the legislation of Greece and Rome, and even tolerated under

* The Bishop of Llandaff.

the Jewiſh œconomy, became a ſource of the moſt odious corruption. The circumſtances of the world called aloud for reformation. A latitude in this article was found alarming to the peace and order of ſociety, and was finally reprobated and aboliſhed by the maxims of our holy religion.

Upon the whole, it may be affirmed that the inſtitution of marriage, more or leſs perfect in different countries, is regulated in the beſt manner poſſible, under the Chriſtian ſyſtem. The liberty of divorce is dangerous, a community barbarous, and polygamy unjuſt.

It may farther be obſerved, that the laws of moſt countries, relative to *inceſt*, though not the immediate ſuggeſtions of inſtinct, are founded on obvious views of expediency and public order. Inceſt in the aſcending and deſcending lines is ſo uniformly odious and ſhocking, that the prohibition may be regarded as the unalterable and declared ſenſe of mankind, wherever theſe relations are known. The inceſtuous marriages of the Aſſyrians, Perſians, and ſome others, which ſeem to militate againſt this concluſion, are rightly aſcribed to the dictates of a falſe religion, which is found, in ſo many inſtances,

inſtances, to triumph over the cleareſt maxims of reaſon and morality.

There is no ground then to accuſe ſuch ſalutary regulations, or envying the unlimited indulgence of other times, to exclaim in the intemperate language of the poet,

——————Felices quibus *iſta* licent!
——————humana malignas
Cura dedit leges: & quod *natura* remittit
Invida jura negant.

OVID. L. 10.

NOTE [*F*], p. 22.

TACITUS, Plutarch, and others, bear teſtimony to the honourable rank of the other ſex among the ancient Gauls.—They are even ſaid to have conferred the ſupreme judicature on their wives, ſupplanted, however, in that function by an artful prieſthood. The women were no leſs honoured among the ancient Britons. They were not only ſuffered to vote in public aſſemblies, but raiſed occaſionally to the ſovereignty of provinces, and even to the command of armies. Their importance among the ancient Germans, and in general under the

Gothic conſtitutions, is eſtabliſhed by a writer who has illuſtrated the liberal genius of feudal aſſociations, and vindicated, in ſome material points, the character of our remote anceſtors *.

In ſeveral countries of Africa the women are ſtill permitted to vote in public; and a multitude of ſimilar examples might be drawn from the annals of uncivilized nations. But the † *Author of the Eſſay on the Hiſtory of Civil Society*, in delineating the character of rude nations, prior to the eſtabliſhment of property, explains the facts alluded to ſomewhat differently.

He admits, that children are conſidered as pertaining to the mother, with little regard to deſcent on the father's ſide. He admits, that domeſtic functions are committed to the women, that the property of the houſhold is veſted in them, and even that the hunter and the warrior are numbered as a part of their treaſure; but contends, "that this ſpecies of property is in "reality a mark of ſubjection; not, ſays he, "as ſome writers allege, of their having ac-"quired the aſcendant."

* See a View of Society in Europe, by G. Stewart, LL. D.
† Dr. Adam Ferguſon.

But

But ſhould we admit to this ingenious Author, that the occupations allotted for the women are accounted more inglorious than the toils of war, and would even be thought to ſully and debaſe the character of the warrior or hero; yet ſuch arrangements, without derogating from the prerogative of the ſuperior ſex, muſt render the condition of the inferior more eligible far than in ſeveral of the ſucceeding ſtages in civil ſociety: "And if," to uſe the language of our Author, "in this tender, though unequal alliance, the affections of the heart prevent the ſeverities practiſed on ſlaves; we have in the cuſtom itſelf, as, perhaps, in many other inſtances, reaſon to prefer the firſt ſuggeſtions of nature to many of her after-refinements."

In ſuch circumſtances too the matrons, as the only aſcertained parents of the riſing generation, could not fail to command excluſively that reſpect and reverence which is the uſual tribute of filial love. The due balance of domeſtic authority being maintained by the equal aſcertainment of both parents, where the deſcent is dubious on one ſide, the balance muſt incline ſtrongly to the other; and though it is ſcarcely credible that mankind ever carried their jealouſy

of this authority ſo far, as to undermine its foundations, by changing the children as ſoon as born; we may believe that uncertainty of deſcent on the father's ſide contributed to the importance at which the women arrived in Britain, in Gaul, in Sparta, and other ſtates.

When it was obſerved by one of another country to the wife of Leonidas, that at Sparta alone the women ruled the men, ſhe replied, with becoming ſpirit, "we are the only women who bring forth men."

The love of war and of women is combined, according to Ariſtotle, in the character of nations. And it muſt be admitted, that a ſpirit of gallantry, and a generous protection of the weaker ſex, which form diſtinguiſhing features of the heroic age, are by no means unexerciſed in the earlieſt arrangements of the human ſpecies.

The fair ſex commanded more veneration among the ancient Celtic nations of Europe than among the Greeks and Romans, whom we are accuſtomed to regard as the moſt civilized

ized nations of antiquity. And their condition, though not to be envied, was leſs unhappy among the rude tribes in North America, than in the cultivated empires of Peru and Mexico, in other reſpects the moſt enlightened governments of the new hemiſphere.

ESSAY II.

ON LANGUAGE, AS AN UNIVERSAL ACCOMPLISHMENT.

IN tracing the origin of arts and ſciences, it is not uncommon to aſcribe to the genius of a few ſuperior minds, what ariſes neceſſarily out of the ſyſtem of man. The efforts of an individual are familiar to the eye. The efforts of the ſpecies are more remote from ſight, and often too deep for our reſearches.

The connexion, therefore, of events with an individual, is a more popular idea, while it gratifies an admiration and enthuſiaſm natural to the human mind. Hence the conduct of hiſtorians, who deſcribe the origin of nations. Hence

are

are celebrated among every people, the firſt inventors of arts, the founders of ſociety, and the inſtitutors of laws and government.

Such revolutions, however, in the condition of the world, are more juſtly reputed the ſlow reſult of ſituations than of regular deſign, and have, perhaps, leſs exerciſed the talents of ſuperior genius, than thoſe of mankind at large. *Uſages* there ſurely are of mere arbitrary inſtitution; *inventions* there ſurely are which originate with one only, or with a few authors. But other uſages and inventions as neceſſarily refer themſelves to the multitude; nor ought the caſual exertions of the former to be confounded with the infallible attainments of the ſpecies.

Under this precaution, then, let us introduce the queſtion concerning language. Is language, it may be aſked, derived to us

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at firſt from the happy invention of a few, or to be regarded as an original accompliſhment and inveſtiture of nature, or to be attributed to ſome ſucceeding effort of the human mind?

The ſuppoſed tranſition of the ſpecies from ſilence to the free exerciſe of ſpeech, were a tranſition indeed aſtoniſhing, and might well ſeem diſproportioned to our intellectual abilities. Neither hiſtory nor philoſophy are deciſive upon this point; and religion, with peculiar wiſdom, refers the attainment to a divine original. Suitable to this idea, language may be accounted, in part *natural*, in part *artificial*: in one view it is the work of providence, in another it is the work of man. And this diſpenſation of things is exactly conformable to the whole analogy of the divine government. With reſpect to the organs of ſpeech, what is there peculiar to boaſt?

boaſt? The ſame external apparatus is common to us and to other animals. In both the workmanſhip is the ſame. In both are diſplayed the ſame mechanical laws. And in order to confer on them ſimilar endowments of ſpeech, nothing more ſeems neceſſary than the enlargement of their ideas, without any alteration of anatomical texture. In like manner, to diveſt, or to abridge mankind of theſe endowments, ſeems to imply only the degradation of the mental faculties, without any variation of external form.

It is not then ſuppoſed that the organs of man alone are capable of forming ſpeech. The voice of ſome animals is louder, and the voice of other animals is more melodious than his. Nor is the human ear alone ſuſceptible of ſuch impreſſions. Animals are often conſcious of the import, and even recognize the harmony of ſound. Thus far

far there ſubſiſts a near equality. Viſible ſigns are likewiſe poſſeſſed in common; and language, in every ſpecies, is the power of maintaining ſocial intercourſe among creatures of the ſame order.

By the ſame medium man is able to converſe, in ſome ſort, with the brute creation; and there the various tribes with each other. But beſides ſome general ſigns conſtituted to preſerve harmony and correſpondence among connected ſyſtems, there are others of a more myſterious kind deſtined for the uſe and accommodation of each particular claſs. In this ſcience the ſagacity of the philoſopher has hitherto made no diſcoveries. The myſtery of animal correſpondence will, probably, be always hid; and it is often no more poſſible to deſcend into the receſſes of their intercourſe, than to open a communication with a higher ſyſtem.

In the great ſcale of life, the intelligence of ſome beings ſoars, perhaps, as high above man as the objects of his underſtanding ſoar above animal life. Let us then imagine a man, in ſome other planet, to reſide among a people of this exalted character.

Inſtructed in the ſounds of their language, as the more docile animals are inſtructed to articulate ours, he might articulate too, but could acquire no more. He might admire the magnificence of ſounds louder or more melodious than he had heard before. But by reaſon of a diſſimilarity and diſproportion of ideas, theſe ſounds could never conduct him to the ſenſe; and the ſecrets of ſuch a people would be as ſafe in his ears, as ours in the ears of any of our domeſtic animals.

For the ſame reaſons, if one of ſuperior race were to drop into our world, our language

language might be, in ſome reſpects, impenetrable even to his underſtanding, becauſe deſtitute perhaps of ſome perceptions eſſential to our meaner ſyſtem.

Thus each order poſſeſſes ſomething peculiar, which is denied to every other; and it belongs to the author of the univerſe alone to exhauſt that immenſity of knowledge which he has diffuſed in various kind and proportion through the whole circle of being.

Here is an arrangement of providence coeval with the birth of things; and conſidering the ſimilarity of organical texture, the *taciturnity* of the other animals is a problem to be accounted for, as well as the *loquacity* of man.

Whence comes it that *he* alone ſo far extends the original grant as almoſt to conſider it as his peculiar and excluſive privi-

lege? Between the lower claſſes and him there ſubſiſts one important diſtinction. They are formed ſtationary; he progreſſive. Had the exact meaſure of his ideas, as of theirs, been at firſt aſſigned, his language muſt have ſtood for ever as fixed and immutable as theirs. But time and mutual intercourſe preſenting new ideas, and the ſcenes of life perpetually varying, the expreſſion of language muſt vary in the ſame proportion; and in order to trace out its original, we muſt go back to the ruder ages, and beginning with the early dawn, follow the gradual illuminations of the human mind.

Man, we may obſerve, is at firſt poſſeſſed of few ideas, and of ſtill fewer deſires. Abſorbed in the preſent object of ſenſe, he ſeldom indulges any train of reflexion on the paſt; and cares not, by anxious anticipation, to antedate futurity.

All

All his competitions with his fellows are rather exertions of body than trials of mind. He values himſelf on the command of the former, and is dextrous in the performance of its various functions. Too impatient for ſlow enterpriſe; too bold and impetuous for intrigue, he uſes the reſources of inſtinct, rather than the lights of the underſtanding; is ſcarce capable of abſtraction, and a ſtranger to all the combinations and connexions of ſyſtematic thought.

In this ſituation of the world there is no need for the details of language. The feelings of the heart break forth in viſible form: ſenſations glow in the countenance, and paſſions flaſh in the eye. Nor are theſe ſilent movements the only vehicles of ſocial intercourſe.

Prior to the contexture of language, and the uſe of arbitrary ſigns, there is eſtabliſhed

a mechanical connexion between the feelings of the ſoul and the enunciation of ſound. The emotions of pleaſure and pain, hope and fear, commiſeration, ſorrow, deſpair, indignation, contempt, joy, exultation, triumph, aſſume their tones; and independently of art, by an inexplicable mechaniſm of nature, declare the purpoſes of man to man. Theſe aſſociations are neither accidental nor equivocal; not formed by compact, or the effect of choice, but are parts of an original eſtabliſhment calculated, in the firſt œconomy, for all the occaſions of ſocial life. And happy ſurely, in one reſpect, was this conſtitution of things, when men were not only devoid of the inclination, but unfurniſhed with the means of deceit; and ſentiment and expreſſion were thus conjoined, by the indiſſoluble ties of nature.

Such accents and exclamations compoſe the firſt elements of a riſing language. And

And in theſe diſtant times, when artificial ſigns have ſo far ſupplanted the natural, *interjection* is a part of ſpeech which retains its primeval character, is ſcarce articulated in any tongue, and is exempted from arbitrary rule.

After the introduction of artificial ſigns, the tone and cadence of the natural were long retained; but theſe fell afterwards into diſuſe; and it became then the province of art to recal the accents of nature.

The perfection of eloquence is allowed to conſiſt in ſuperadding to ſentiment and diction, all the emphaſis of voice and geſture. And enunciation, or action, as it is called, is extolled by the moſt approved judges of antiquity as the capital excellence.

The deciſive judgment of Demoſthenes is well known: and the Roman orator,

who records that judgment, expatiates himſelf in almoſt every page, on that comprehenſive language, which, independently of arbitrary appointment, addreſſes itſelf to all nations, and to every underſtanding *.

In a certain period of ſociety, there reigns a natural elocution, which the greateſt maſters afterwards are proud to imitate, and which art can ſo ſeldom ſupply. At firſt, the talent of the orator, as of the poet, is an inborn talent. Nor has Demoſthenes, or Tully, or Roſcius, or Garrick, in their moſt animated and admired performances, reached, perhaps, that vivacity and force which accompany the rude accents of mankind.

In the ſame original connexion of things reſides the expreſſion of muſic, or the irreſiſtible tendency of the modulations of

* Vide Cic. de Orat. L. 3. et paſſim.

ſound

ſound to ſtir and agitate the different paſſions [*A*]. Hence the aſtoniſhing effect aſcribed to muſic in ancient times, and the empire it ſtill maintains, in a peculiar manner, over rude and unpoliſhed nations.

A Writer*, who exhauſts on his favourite ſcience ſo much ingehuity and learning, has aſſigned indeed other cauſes for the empire of muſic among the ancients, beſides its intrinſic excellence [*B*].

I oppoſe not ſuch reſpectable authority. But though the ſcience of harmony is progreſſive; though *ſimultaneous harmony*, or muſic in parts, is entirely modern, yet the union of ſound and ſenſe is an original union; and the moſt wonderful effects of that union are prior to the age of refinement.

* Dr. Burney's Gen. Hiſt. of Muſic.

"The recitative in muſic, according to the obſervation of an exquiſite judge *, is only a more tuneable ſpeaking: it is a kind of proſe in muſic; its beauty conſiſts in coming nearer nature, and improving the natural accents of words by more pathetic and emphatical tones." The ſcale of muſic in different countries is the ſame; and all the variety of its expreſſion throughout the earth forms but ſo many dialects of one univerſal language as unalterable as the human paſſions.

Such cauſes then, in the infancy of mankind, operating alone, or with little aid, ſeemed to ſuperſede all motives to invention; while affairs, however, were gradually approaching towards a different ſtage.

Next to the impulſes of appetite, and the ſocial paſſions, the talent of *imitation* diſplays its force. Nor is this talent the gift of heaven to man alone. He ſhares

* Congreve.

it

it in common with the creatures below him; ſome of whom avail themſelves of its exertions in the purſuit of their prey. That even the muſical notes of birds are not altogether innate, but rather acquired by imitation, is a propoſition ſupported by late obſervations. Yet in conſequence of a predilection, not eaſily explained, ſimilar or kindred notes appear to be univerſally characteriſtic of the ſame ſpecies, varying only in different regions of the globe, like different dialects of the ſame tongue. One ſpecies of birds excels in imitation, and in a variety of note; another in the perfection of muſical organs; and hence, by combining the peculiar excellencies of different ſpecies, an ingenious naturaliſt has ſuggeſted a method of improving upon the muſic of the grove [C].

Among animals, however, the talent of imitation occurs more rarely, or is limited to a few performances, and theſe reſorted

to as an expedient, rather than as an ultimate end.

But the performances of man are conſpicuous, and various, and almoſt without bounds. He is prompted to imitation from a love of the effect, and excluſive of all reference to farther end, enters it into the liſt of his pleaſures. Often this ſecondary pleaſure exceeds the primary. And there are few, I imagine, who would reject an entertainment of this ſort, on the ſame principle with Ageſilaus of Sparta. When invited to hear a performer who mimicked the nightingale to great perfection, the faſtidious king replied, "I have heard the "nightingale herſelf." The entertainment might be unworthy of a king; but it was declined, on a principle that forms an exception to the general taſte. And imitation may be juſtly called the firſt intellectual amuſement congenial with our being: in confirmation of which we might

appeal

appeal to the firſt eſſays of infancy, to the taſte for the imitative arts ſo predominant in youth, and to the earlieſt compoſitions of antiquity [*D*].

Man alone is capable of imitating every creature, while he is, if I may ſay ſo, himſelf a creature which no other can pretend to imitate. In the indulgence then of this talent, he adopts, as it were, every mode of inſtinct, and re-echoes every voice in the foreſt. Even ſtill life attracts his attention; and the application of the ſame talent to every ſubject, renders him a maſter in expreſſion, and ripens his genius while it exerciſes his mechanical powers.

Thus is he occupied in borrowing not only from his own ſpecies, but in tranſcribing, for his amuſement, the appearances of the natural and of the animal world; in collecting materials, without knowing their importance, and in laying with an

active,

active, though undesigning hand, the foundations of all arts and sciences.

This imitative faculty operates so vigorously on the organs of speech, that in some cases sound in general seems to become an object of imitation, without any particular archetype. Hence the mechanical trials of children in the easier expressions, when their organs are incapable of other articulation. And hence the same sounds run uniformly through all languages, to denote either parent, to whom the earliest expressions are presumed to be addressed.

such exertions are we rendered capable of indicating, by intelligible signs, the more striking and familiar objects. But to give an additional compass to the powers of speech was reserved for another principle allied to the former, and often undistinguished in its operations, which may be

deno-

denominated the *analogical* faculty. A faculty which has vaſt power in binding the aſſociations of thoughts, and in all the mental arrangements; but with whoſe influence on language alone we are at preſent concerned.

Hitherto language conſiſted in the voice of inſtinct, or was drawn by imitation from an actual ſimilarity in the nature of things. *Now* analogical connexions ſupply the place of real reſemblance. *Now* inſtinct borrows aid from *imagination*; and it is the weakneſs of this principle which impoſes the law of ſilence, and excludes all poſſibility of improvement in the animal world. Here commences the reign of invention, and here perhaps we ſhould ſtop, and draw the boundary of art and nature.

There is not an object that can preſent itſelf to the ſenſes, or to the imagination, which

which the mind, by its analogical faculty, *cannot aſſimilate to ſomething antecedently* in its poſſeſſion. By conſequence, a term already appropriated, and in uſe, will, by no violent tranſition, be ſhaped and adjuſted to the new idea. And thus the diviſion and compoſition of the primary ſigns will conſtitute relations in ſound, correſpondent with thoſe relations, real or imaginary, which ſubſiſt among the objects of human knowledge. Thus the language of the Chineſe conſiſts of a few words only, which, by a variation of tone merely, become the repreſentatives of all the ideas of that enlightened people.

This mode of proceeding is ſo conſpicuous in our firſt attempts, that it is with reluctance children adopt a word altogether new, ſo long as they can aſſimilate the object to any of their former acquaintance. And it is wonderful to obſerve with what

promptitude, facility, and apparent ingenuity, they can draw ſuch various expreſſion out of their little ſtore. It is accordingly no illiberal entertainment in preſenting ſtrange objects to their ſight, to wait by way of experiment for their own concluſions, and to cauſe them to diſtinguiſh each by names of their own invention [*E*]. This would be, perhaps, no improper exerciſe in training their infant faculties; and it ſeems to have been upon the ſame principle that the firſt of mankind, at the deſire and with the approbation of his Creator, was able to name ſo readily all the beaſts of the field, and the fowls of heaven.

Many ſubſequent innovations in language may be traced up to the ſame ſource; and ſigns apparently the moſt arbitrary are either the reſult of ſome more refined connexion, or are ſeparated from their primitives by a longer chain of analogy.

By

By this power the ſame natural ſign, beſides its primary, admits of a ſecondary, and even of various import; and what originally denoted an outward object, is by a certain ſubtlety of apprehenſion tranſferred to the qualities of the mind [*F*]. Thus language becomes figurative; and, without any extenſion of the vocabulary, takes in the compaſs of our intellectual ideas. It is this principle likewiſe which conducts the ſame ſign from the individual to the ſpecies, and by the frequent application of it, on ſimilar occaſions, confers on it a larger and a larger import, till at laſt it acquires a general acceptation, without any painful or laborious effort.

This proceſs of the mind accounts for the generation of all the different parts of ſpeech, as might be ſhewn more particularly in the riſe of that eſſential conſtituent of language, which by reaſon of its importance is denominated the *verb*.

Not

Not only are emotions of different kinds excited by the objects of ſenſe, but the ſame kind of emotion is wonderfully modified, according to the circumſtances of its birth. How various, even in the ſavage breaſt, are the modes of love! how various the emotion of fear!

Let us then ſuppoſe that the lion and the ſerpent are conſidered by the ſavage as the moſt hoſtile and formidable among animals. A certain ſpecies of terror would be excited by the approach of the one; a different modification of the ſame emotion would be excited by the approach of the other.

Now, in the firſt ſtage of language, the natural ſigns of theſe kindred emotions, it is preſumed, would be employed to indicate, and to diſtinguiſh the approach of theſe animals. In the mean while, let it be ſuppoſed that the other inhabitants of

the forest have received their names. In these circumstances it is abundantly natural for the savage to join the term, indicating the dread of the lion or serpent, with a proper name, in order to notify the approach of any other offensive creature. This term, by an easy extension, will be transferred from offensive to other creatures; and hence by a gradual transition, even to inanimate objects, till it is charged at length with a general affirmation. It possesses all the power of the verb [G].

Such steps as these, we may believe, have led to the more regular combinations of sound; and, under this aspect of things, we may conceive language strong indeed, and animated, but probably remaining long without much compass, or coherence, or order. It consisted chiefly of detached phrase. And though every sound formed not a complete sentence, as at the beginning, yet the more artificial arrangements

were

were unknown. Thoſe connective particles which intimate the relations of thought were not yet brought into exiſtence; and the relations themſelves were rather inſinuated to the underſtanding than expreſſed in form. Nor is this abrupt mode of expreſſion unſuitable to the circumſtances of the ſimple ages. Sentiment, as well as its dreſs, hung then extremely looſe; and men were not accuſtomed to a chain of reaſoning, or to any complex ſyſtem of thought. Nor is it leſs conformable to the experience of our early life, the trueſt perſpective, perhaps, in which to contemplate the riſing genius of mankind. In the firſt dialects of children, the particles are but little attended to, if not totally diſregarded. They reject the texture of artificial language, even while they adopt its words, preſenting the capital objects in immediate ſucceſſion, without the intervention of terms which are of a more obſcure and abſtract original. It is the ſame mode

of proceeding which is ſo often obſervable in vehement ſpeakers, who, in the hurry of declamation, or of paſſion, have no leiſure to attend to the rules of grammar, or logic. The language of paſſion accordingly, which conſiſts of broken periods, has been happily imitated by the poets, and might be here illuſtrated, were it neceſſary, by examples from the greateſt maſters, whoſe prerogative it is to diſpenſe in favour of nature with the eſtabliſhed rules of art.

It is alſo remarkable in all the ancient tongues, that the moſt important diſtinctions and relations of objects are indicated by an inflexion of the voice, or a ſlight variation of the ſame ſound, without reſorting ſo often to the little engines, which ſupport the modern ſyſtems.

Even this inflexion of voice is not always indiſpenſable; and in the oriental tongues no inconveniency is perceived from the

want

want of the *genitive caſe*; though there is neither an inflexion, nor any intervening particle to ſuggeſt the relation.

Let it not then be imagined, that abſtract conſiderations have entered far into the firſt formation of ſpeech. Such laborious effort had been ill ſuited to the genius and circumſtances of the firſt inventors; and even the *particles* themſelves, though of more doubtful origin, have crept into exiſtence, without any ſevere application of metaphyſical force.

Thoſe talents alone exerciſed by every human creature, in acquiring his firſt language, have been exerciſed by the original inſtitutors. In both caſes the love of imitation is often the prime mover, without any farther deſign. Taught by parents, children learn to utter ſound, to which afterwards they affix a meaning. Taught by inſtinct, men utter ſound at the begin-

ning, which the underſtanding afterwards renders more ſignificant. In both caſes, the act of the underſtanding is poſterior to a ſort of organical impulſe; and in both caſes there ſeems to be leſs abſtraction than is contended for in the ſchools of philoſophy.

Is a man, for example, to be reputed ignorant of the force of particles, becauſe he is incapable to give a metaphyſical account of their origin? And if without metaphyſics he apprehends theſe particles, why not invent them too?

If we ſuppoſe but one of the moſt obvious relations to be diſtinctly marked by any particle, that particle will, as it were ſpontaneouſly, offer itſelf upon all ſimilar occaſions; and from the law of analogy will be gradually extended in its ſignification, until it includes under it a vaſt variety of relation: for it is transferred from object

to

to object in the *concrete*, without any abſtract conſideration of its powers.

It is eaſier for the mind to perceive reſemblance, than to ſpecify the minute differences of things. Hence the ſame particles are uſed to denote various relations, without our attending to their ſpecific differences. And hence theſe terms, in all languages, are ſo liable to be confounded, and carry often a ſort of vicarious import, mutually participating of the ſame powers.

When the analogy loſes itſelf in refinement, new particles are deviſed, and inveſted with a different office. And were an ordinary man called upon to define the prepoſitions, or other little conſtituents of any modern tongue, without a certain preparation of his faculties, the anſwer with regard to the greater number would be indefinite, or evaſive, or merely negative. This particle, might he ſay, differs in its

import from that other: that other from a third. They ſeverally denote relations altogether diſſimilar. It is eaſier to ſay what they are not, than what they are.

Should a more explicit anſwer be required, he refers to others more learned than himſelf, or involves himſelf in a labyrinth, in which the primary conſtructors of language never were involved, and from which the logician or the philologiſt can hardly extricate him. "The particles, ſays a * writer in whom theſe characters are united, are among all nations applied with ſo great latitude, that they are not eaſily reducible under any regular ſcheme of application. This difficulty is not leſs, nor, perhaps, greater in Engliſh than in any other language. I have laboured them with diligence, I hope with ſucceſs; ſuch at leaſt as can be expected in a taſk, which no man however learned or ſagacious has yet been able to perform [*H*]."

* Dr. S. Johnſon.

He

He muſt be born then with a texture of brain as ſtrong as that of *Johnſon:* he muſt be a *Hercules* in metaphyſics, who can declare, in their metaphyſical character, the full import of theſe elements of ſpeech.

Yet the relations of its own thoughts the mind clearly apprehends. The ſigns of theſe relations, when once inſtituted, it apprehends with equal eaſe. But theſe relations, clear as the light in the preſence of particular objects, in their abſence are involved in obſcurity.

The vulgar find little difficulty to apprehend the ſoul itſelf in an embodied ſtate; but it is reſerved for the philoſopher to apprehend its ſeparate and abſtract exiſtence. And as well might it be contended that this ſublime apprehenſion had, in every age, entered into the imagination of our forefathers, as that the nicer relations of thought had exhibited themſelves naked to the underſtanding, and received names

in

in artificial language, disjoined from the other members which compose the body of this complex machine.

With reason therefore we conclude, that the laws of analogy, by one gentle and uniform effect, superseding or alleviating the efforts of abstraction, permit language to advance towards its perfection free of the embarrassments which seemed to obstruct its progress.

In most speculations upon this subject, there reigns a fundamental error. It consists in referring the rise of ideas and the invention of language to a different æra, as if a time had ever been when mankind laboured for utterance, yet sought in vain to open intellectual treasures, and to be exonerated from the load of their own conceptions. Under this impression we are apt to imagine some great projectors in an early age, balancing a regular plan for the conveyance of sentiment, and the establish-

eſtabliſhment of general intercourſe. In ſuch circumſtances, indeed, they muſt have revolved in imagination all the ſubtleties of logic, and entered far into the ſcience of grammar, before its objects had any exiſtence. Profound abſtraction and generalization muſt have been conſtantly exerciſed; all the relations of thought canvaſſed with care, compared with accuracy, and arranged with propriety, and with order: a deſign competent, perhaps, to ſuperior beings, but by no means compatible with the limited capacity of the human mind. Now theſe difficulties and incumbrances, in a great meaſure, diſappear, by contemplating ideas and language as uniformly in cloſe conjunction; and the changes in the former, and the innovations in the latter of the ſame chronological date.

A few ideas, in the ruder ages, are ſubjected to expreſſion with the ſame facility,

as

as a greater number in ſucceeding periods. And hence ſpeech, in all its different parts, is already formed, when the vocabulary is exceeding ſcanty, and there is no variety or abundance in any one claſs. Thus a Grammar even of the Lapland tongue contains all the grammatical parts of ſpeech *. Hence too the eaſe with which a language is attained in infancy, or early youth, and the difficulty attending it in maturer age. When the idea and the ſign are contemporary attainments, and coincide in their firſt impreſſions, they take root together, and ſerve reciprocally the one to ſuggeſt the other. But where this coincidence is wanting, it becomes more difficult, if not impoſſible, for the mind to collect its naked thoughts, and ſubject them afterwards in all their variety to the arbitrary impoſitions of language.

* See a Laplandiſh Grammar, lately publiſhed by Mr. Leem, Profeſſor of the Lapland tongue.

A more

A more equal œconomy, therefore, has been maintained by the direction of that principle of analogy to which we ſo often refer; and the connexion is more eaſily eſtabliſhed, when, from the ſimplicity and uniformity of ſavage life, the ſame ſigns return ſo often; when the whole compaſs of the vocabulary is exhauſted upon familiar objects, and almoſt comprized in the hiſtory of a day's adventures. Thus a vocabulary, conſiſting of about twenty words, is ſaid to be ſufficient, in all their ordinary tranſactions, for the purpoſes of ſome ſavage nations.

Language then, conſtructed with ſuch ſcanty materials, increaſes with the experience and diſcernment of mankind. On a more exact ſurvey, the mind diſcriminates its objects, and breaks the ſyſtem of analogy by attending to the minute differences of things. As therefore the *analogical faculty* enlarges the ſenſe of words, the *diſcriminating*

nating faculty augments them in number. It breaks ſpeech into ſmaller diviſions; and beſtows a copiouſneſs on language by a more preciſe arrangement of the objects. Thus by the diſtribution of our ideas, as well as by the enlargement of the fund, language is conſtantly enriched; and its barrenneſs or fertility among a riſing people may be always eſtimated by the number of the objects, and the accuracy with which they are claſſed.

At a time when utility was almoſt regarded as the whole of beauty, and perſpicuity was the ſole aim of ſpeech, nothing ſuperfluous would ever be admitted there. Afterwards the coalition and interferences of different tribes confounded the ſimplicity of the inſtitution, by the admiſſion of foreign, identical, and ſupernumerary terms. The love of novelty and variety eſtabliſhed their currency: a ſpecies of luxury is indulged in the commerce of

words. Each ſimple inſtitution ſuſtained a ſhock from the colliſion of contending ſyſtems, and out of theſe jarrings there aroſe more copious and mixed eſtabliſhments.

By ſuch cauſes is language diverſified by degrees, in its words, in its texture, and in its idiom. What is at firſt only a variety of dialects, produces diſtinct languages in ſucceeding generations. And after ſeparation from the fountain the differences among them become more conſiderable in proportion to the length of their courſe. Thus the Engliſh, the French, and Italian tongues, have borrowed their vocabulary from the Greeks and Romans, while in their texture and idiom they are allied to the Celtic, and to the Hebrew, or claim a very diſtant original.

But the conſideration of theſe differences would carry us beyond the limit of the preſent

preſent deſign, which permits us only to touch on the gradations of a ſimple inſtitution referring to thoſe faculties of the mind which appear principally concerned in conducting its ſucceſſive improvements. In the execution of the enterpriſe the mind, no doubt, has exerted collectively, at all times, various powers; but theſe are exerted in unequal proportion, according to the circumſtances of the world; and the order here aſſigned appeared to our judgement moſt conſonant to the probability of things, to the experience of early life, and to the genius and complexion of the ruder ages.

By ſuch efforts, or at leaſt by efforts competent to the abilities of every ſociety of mankind, ſome rude ſyſtem is conſtructed on the foundations of nature. The ſuperſtructure becomes vaſt and magnificent, like the conceptions of the human mind; but that ſuperſtructure is the work

of

of ages, and is as complicated and various, in the different regions of the globe, as the modes of civil life, as the aſpect of nature, and as the genius of arts and ſciences.

Having therefore conſidered ſpeech in its lower forms, we proceed to enquire into thoſe ſuperior marks of refinement and art which conſtitute the criterion of a poliſhed tongue.

NOTES.

NOTE [*A*], p. 71.

THOUGH the modulations of ſound declare in general the feelings of the heart, muſic imitates the ſocial paſſions with the happieſt ſucceſs. A diſtinction which intimates the ſociability and generoſity of man, and is well illuſtrated by Dr. Smith in the *Theory of moral Sentiment*.

"When muſic imitates the modulations of "grief, or joy, it either actually inſpires us "with thoſe paſſions, or at leaſt puts us in the "mood which diſpoſes us to conceive them. "But when it imitates the notes of anger, it "inſpires us with fear. Joy, grief, love, ad- "miration, devotion, are all of them paſſions "which are naturally muſical. Their natural "tones are all ſoft, clear, and melodious; and "they naturally expreſs themſelves in periods "which are diſtinguiſhed by regular pauſes, "and which upon that account are eaſily adapt-

"ed

" ed to the regular returns of the correſpond-
" ing airs of a tune. The voice of anger,
" on the contrary, and of all the paſſions
" which are akin to it, is harſh and diſcord-
" ant. Its periods too are irregular, ſome-
" times very long, ſometimes very ſhort, and
" diſtinguiſhed by no regular pauſes. It is
" with difficulty therefore that muſic can imi-
" tate any of thoſe paſſions, and the muſic
" which does imitate them is not the moſt
" agreeable. A whole entertainment may con-
" ſiſt, without any impropriety, in the imitation
" of the ſocial and agreeable paſſions. It would
" be a ſtrange entertainment which conſiſted
" altogether of the imitations of hatred and
" reſentment."

Part I. ſect. ii. ch. 3.

NOTE [*B*], p. 71.

PERHAPS the ſimplicity of ancient muſic contributed to its effect. Perhaps from its union with poetry it derived its moſt alluring charms. Yet theſe arts may, on ſome occaſions, encumber each other, and ought, in the opinion of ſome good judges, to hold a divided empire. This is a problem in the hiſtory of muſic which an adept in the ſcience is alone capable to de-

cide, and I am ready to adopt the opinion and language of Dr. Burney, that "muſic and "poetry, like man and wife, or other aſſo-"ciates, are beſt aſunder, if they cannot agree; "and, on many occaſions, it were to be wiſhed, "that the partnerſhip were amicably diſſolved."

The danger at preſent ſeems to be, that muſic in preference to poetry, and *inſtrumental* muſic in preference to *vocal*, to which it is ſo far inferior, ſhould uſurp an improper dominion in all the politer circles. An obſervation of Mr. *Gay* to Dr. *Swift*, in the year 1723, relative to the faſhionable taſte of the metropolis, is now applicable in a much larger extent. "As for the reigning amuſement of the town," ſays he, "it is entirely muſic; real fiddles, "baſs viols, and hautboys; not poetical harps, "lyres, and reeds. There is nobody allowed "to ſay *I ſing*, but an Eunuch, or an *Italian* "woman. Every body is grown now as great "a judge of muſic as they were in your time "of poetry; and folks that could not diſtin-"guiſh one tune from another, now daily "diſpute about the different ſtyles of *Handel*, "*Bononcini*, and *Attilio*. People have now for-"got *Homer*, and *Virgil*, and *Cæſar*, or, at leaſt, "they have loſt their ranks; for in *London* and

"*Weſt-*

" *Weſtminſter*, in all polite converſations, *Scene-*
" *ſino* is daily voted the greateſt man that ever
" lived." But without reflecting on the national taſte, let it be ſufficient to obſerve, that muſic is not the only imitative art, which, in the progreſs of refinement, ceaſes to be ſo ſignificant.

N'eſt il pas ſingulier, ſays Monſ. l'Abbé Reynal, que dans les premiers ages du monde, & chez les ſauvages, *la danſe* ſoit un art d'imitation, & qu'elle ait perdu ce caractere dans les pays policés, où elle ſemble reduite à une certaine nombre de pas executés ſans action, ſans ſujet, ſans conduite? Mais il en eſt des danſes comme des langues: elles deviennent abſtraites, ainſi que les idées dont elles ſont compoſées.

Tom. vi. p. 27.

NOTE [C], p. 73.

I Refer the reader to Experiments and Obſervations on the ſinging of Birds, by the Hon. Daines Barrington, inſerted in the Philoſophical Tranſactions of the year 1773.

" Theſe experiments," ſays Mr. Barrington, " may be ſaid to be uſefull to all thoſe who

" happen to be pleaſed with ſinging birds. " Becauſe it is clear, that, by educating a bird " under ſeveral ſorts, we may often make ſuch " a mixture as to improve the notes which " they would have learned in a wild ſtate.

" It reſults alſo from the experiment of the " linnet being educated under the vengolina, " that we may introduce the notes of Aſia, " Africa, and America into our own woods; " becauſe if that linnet had been ſet at liberty, " the neſtlings of the next ſeaſon would have " adhered to the vengolina ſong, who would " again tranſmit it to their deſcendants."

The muſical notes of birds, if we believe Lucretius, a naturaliſt as well as a poet, firſt ſuggeſted to man the elements of a ſcience in which he afterwards ſo far excels them. For the notes of birds, however melodious, are not only deſtitute of harmony, but deficient in expreſſion, which in muſic is the capital excellence.

NOTE [*D*], p. 75.

IT is, perhaps, not foreign from the ſubject to obſerve, that men of genius, though no poets or painters by profeſſion, ſo often diſcover,

cover, in early life, a proneneſs to the imitative arts, which yield to more ſerious occupation in maturer years. Even the maſters themſelves, in the decline of life, no longer court the muſes with equal aſſiduity. It is then the poet, tranſformed into the philoſopher, abandons his former walk——

Hinc itaque & verſus & cætera ludicra pono.

The Biography of the Engliſh Poets, to which a writer of the firſt rank in literature now calls the attention of the public, affords a variety of examples of this predilection in early life. Cowley and Milton, as well as Pope, "liſped in numbers." Cowley had read all Spenſer, while under twelve, had commenced a poet at thirteen, and an author at fifteen, when his *poetical bloſſoms* appeared. In the *Comus* of Milton, a juvenile production, we behold the dawn of an immortal day.

The author of Gondibert compoſed a poem on the death of Shakeſpeare, at the age of ten.

Dr. Jortin was a poet in youth, and a critic in maturer age.

Lord Lanſdown compoſed moſt of his poetical pieces when a perfect child, the correction of which afforded employment to his riper years.

Voltaire commenced poet at twelve, compoſed the Henriade while under twenty-four, and his *Brutus*, which he regarded "comme ſa tragedie la plus fortement ecrite," at thirty-ſix.

The preſent *Imperial Laureat* *, an appellation which his merit alone might almoſt extort from his contemporaries, is an aſtoniſhing inſtance of the premature inſpiration of the muſes. And not to multiply inſtances among foreign nations, the Poems aſcribed to Thomas Rowley, a ſecular prieſt of Briſtol, who flouriſhed in the fifteenth century, are probably the production of a youth, who died Anno 1770, at the age of eighteen, a prodigy of genius; and who, in the opinion of no contemptible judge, would have proved the firſt of Engliſh poets, had he reached the full manhood of his days. "From his childhood," ſays Mr. Warton, "he "was fond of reading and writing verſes, and "ſome of his early compoſitions, which he "wrote without any deſign to deceive, have "been judged to be moſt aſtoniſhing produc-"tions by the firſt critic of the preſent age."

* Metaſtaſio.

Waller

Waller indeed is recorded a ſingular inſtance of a poet, who began late the exerciſe of a poetic talent. "At an age," ſays Lord Clarendon, "when other men uſed to give over writ-"ing verſes (for he was near thirty years of age "when he firſt engaged himſelf in that exerciſe, "at leaſt that he was known to do ſo), he ſur-"priſed the town with two or three pieces of "that kind, as if a tenth muſe had been newly "born to cheriſh drooping poetry."

But this evidence is not concluſive; nor is the noble hiſtorian perfectly correct in point of fact. For the muſe of Waller had even acquired a name in the twenty-fourth year of his age. It is reaſonable, however, to expect that the more perfect performances of a great maſter will be of later date. A correct judgment is a quality ſo eſſential to great execution in the imitative arts, that, according to the Abbé du Bot, it is about the age of thirty that the greateſt geniuſes, whether in poetry or painting, have produced their maſter-pieces.

But to this Dryden is an eminent exception. His lateſt performances are the beſt. His fire, ſays Pope, like the ſun's, ſhone cleareſt towards its ſetting. Addiſon adorns him with ſimilar

praiſe; and he merited the following encomium from the illuſtrious patron of his declining age:

Not all the blaſts of time can do you wrong,
Young ſpite of age, in ſpite of weakneſs ſtrong;
Time, like *Alcides*, ſtrikes you to the ground;
You, like *Antæus*, from each fall rebound.

NOTE [*E*], p. 79.

OMIAH, the Otaheitean, circumſcribed as a child in the number of his ideas, though in underſtanding and in years a man, proceeded on ſimilar principles in the acquiſition of the Engliſh tongue.

The butler he called king of the bottles, Captain Fourneaux was king of the ſhip, Lord Sandwich was king of all the ſhips. The whole language of his own country exceeds not a thouſand words.

NOTE [*F*], p. 80.

SUCH is the natural order of analogy in the generation of ſpeech. But the reverſe order, where words expreſſive of ideas purely intellectual, are transferred to corporeal objects, is ſome-

ſometimes obſervable in a cultivated language; inſtances of which are produced in *Melange de Literature par Monſ. d'Alembert.*

NOTE [G], p. 82.

IN elucidating this part of ſpeech, it has been well obſerved by Dr. Smith, that "impersonal verbs, which expreſs in one word a "complete event, which preſerve in the expreſſion that perfect ſimplicity and unity "which there always is in the object and in the "idea, and which ſuppoſe no abſtraction or "metaphyſical diviſion of the event into its "ſeveral conſtituent members of ſubject and "attribute, would, in all probability, be the "ſpecies of verbs firſt invented."

But afterwards, in the progreſs of language, by the diviſion of every event into its metaphyſical elements, impersonal verbs diſappear. In modern tongues, accordingly, they are unknown. Yet they make a figure in the languages of antiquity, and eſpecially in the Hebrew, where the radical words, from which all others are derived, are traced up by grammarians to that original.

See Conſiderations concerning the firſt Formation of Languages, &c.

NOTE

NOTE [*H*], p. 88.

THE ill ſucceſs of all former grammarians ancient and modern, has not intimidated a writer in the gloom and ſolitude of a priſon, from undertaking ſo arduous a taſk.

See a letter to John Dunning, Eſq; by Mr. Horne. In this letter the conjunctions of the Engliſh tongue are traced up to a ſource unobſerved or unacknowledged by any grammarian. The ſame analogy is preſumed to be univerſal; and conjunctions, according to this plan, no longer rank among the grammatical elements, but are derived in one uniform manner, in all languages, from the other parts of ſpeech.

ESSAY III.

OF THE CRITERION OF A POLISHED TONGUE.

THE connexion of language and manners is an obvious connexion. They run parallel with each other, through different periods of their progreſs. Yet language, from various cauſes, may arrive at a pitch of refinement, unauthoriſed by the tone of public manners. And on the other hand, public manners may acquire a ſuperior caſt of refinement, which the language alone would not authoriſe us to expect.

So various and equivocal are the marks either of rudeneſs or refinement in the language and manners of a people, that to form, on ſuch ſubjects, a conſiſtent theory, is no eaſy taſk. In both caſes, however, a man

a man of taſte and obſervation muſt feel and recognize diſtinctions, though he were unable to ſpecify them, or to aſſign with preciſion the laws by which they are governed.

We have attempted to approach the common fountain of all languages, but pretend not to purſue the meanders of their courſe.

Articulation, if not an univerſal attribute of human ſpeech, is an excellence at which it ſoon arrives [*A*]. Of rudeneſs, therefore, or refinement, this particular can form no criterion. Language too, in both extremes, may be ſubjected to rules of ſyntax nearly ſimilar; and by conſequence the principles of grammar will not carry us far into the origin of theſe diſtinctions. Is there an appeal to the ear; ſome diſtinction is perceived, and a rougher tone and cadence are found to correſpond beſt with the temper and manners of Barbarians.

At

At firſt *perſpicuity* is chiefly or alone regarded. Nothing conducive to that end is offenſive to the organ; but afterwards perſpicuity is in part ſacrificed to ornament. Some indulgence is ſhewn to the ear; and its perceptions acquire refinement, as well as all our other perceptions. Hence ariſes, by inſenſible gradations, a new ſyſtem of ſounds.

Words fluctuate with the modes of life. They are varied, or exterminated as harſh and diſſonant, upon the ſame principle that any mode or faſhion is varied or exterminated as rude and vulgar. And the prevalence of this principle ultimately tends to the eſtabliſhment of a general diſtinction. Hence the ſmoothneſs of the Ionic dialect, rather than the roughneſs of the Doric, recommends itſelf to a poliſhed age.

Peter the Great conſidered the *German* as a ſmooth and harmonious tongue, and ordered

ordered it as ſuch to be uſed at Court. In proportion as the Court of Peterſburgh became more poliſhed, the German was diſcarded; and the French ſubſtituted in its room.

In general the ſuperior refinement of the French eſtabliſhed its currency in all the politer circles of the North of Europe. And upon the ſame principle the Greek, which had no charms for the Romans in the ruder ages of the republic, raviſhed the ears of imperial Rome.

Hoc ſermone pavent; hoc iram, gaudia, curas,
Hoc cuncta effundunt animi ſecreta.

Juv. Sat. vi.

In the production of the ſounds of language *climate* [*B*] is concerned, as well as the degrees of civilization. But this natural cauſe operating upon manners alſo, and through that medium upon ſpeech, its direct and ſimple influence upon the organs ought

ought not to be confounded with its reflex and more complicated operations.

Climate, in both ways, may favour or obſtruct refinement in ſounds, or derive to them a peculiar character.

If the language of the Malais, a people barbarous and fierce, is however rightly celebrated as the ſofteſt in * Aſia, the climate, in ſuch inſtances, by an irreſiſtible application to the organs, acts in oppoſition to manners, and controuls their natural tendency. If the jargon of the Hottentots is, on the other hand, the harſheſt jargon in the world, it ſeems an effect rather chargeable on manners with which the climate is not immediately concerned.

In periods, however, of equal refinement, the articulation and accents of the North

* Voyez Les Voyages d'un Philoſophe, par M. Le Poivre.

are, in our hemiſphere, diſtinguiſhable from the articulation and accents of the ſouthern regions. Inarticulate ſound is governed by ſimilar rules, and a different ſtyle and compoſition in muſic are found beſt accommodated to the genius of different nations.

The French muſic accordingly, as well as the Italian, is univerſally exploded among the Turks; and whether from the texture of their organs, or from climate, or from certain habitudes of life, poſſeſſes no power to raviſh their ears with harmony, or to intereſt the paſſions.

In general European muſic is diſreliſhed, or exploded in the Eaſt. "Your muſic," ſaid a native of Egypt to M. Niebuhr, "is a wild and offenſive noiſe which a ſerious man can hardly endure." Nor is this an anomalous example. When Iſmenias, the greateſt maſter in muſic at the Court of Macedon,

Macedon, was commanded to perform before the king of Scythia; the king [C] having heard the performance, far from acquiescing in the public admiration, swore that to *him* the neighing of a horse was more agreeable: so little acceptable to *Scythian* ears, and to a barbarous monarch, were the most admired compositions of the Greeks.

Even among nations of equal refinement there is to each appropriated a style in music resulting from local circumstances, or from certain peculiarities of character; and national music, because more intelligible, will ever be more acceptable than foreign [D], to the inhabitants of every country. Thus the same sounds, though in some respects intelligible to all, excite perceptions which are merely relative, and therefore variable with the mechanism of our organs, with the associations of fancy, and with the cultivation of taste. It is the same with words. Words adopted

into language, in the age of barbariſm, and whoſe harſhneſs then is either not diſcernible, or not offenſive, will of courſe be relinquiſhed, or abolished in a more diſcerning and cultivated period. And by conſequence, *ſentences* conſtructed with ſuch different materials, though the vehicle of the ſame ideas to the underſtanding, will impreſs our organs with characteriſtical and diſtinct perceptions.

It is a remark of Voltaire, in celebrating the illuſtrious founders of Helvetian liberty, that the difficulty of pronouncing ſuch names had injured their fame with poſterity.

A ſimilar remark might be formed with regard to certain ſciences and arts, where technical terms abound, and a diſcouragement ariſes from the coarſeneſs of the language in which they are delivered. Not to mention the uſeleſs jargon of the ſchools,

grown

grown ſo juſtly offenſive to the public ear, the barbariſm of its ſcientific terms proves in the preſent age, at leaſt in the faſhionable world, rather unfriendly to the Linnæan ſyſtem. This naturaliſts confeſs. The late Mr. Gray, whoſe muſical parts were ſo delicate and correct, was ſo ſtruck with this deformity in a ſyſtem in other reſpects ſo worthy of admiration, as to have attempted to make the German Latin of Linnæus purely claſſical *: a taſk which perhaps Gray alone was able to perform. But though this ſpecies of deformity may be an object of regret, faſtidious ſurely, or rather to the laſt degree fantaſtical, is the taſte which can be diverted, by ſuch frivolous conſideration, from the ſtudy of nature.

The ſenſe of harmony in a well conſtituted mind, diſpenſes with its objects, in

* See Gray's Works by Maſon.

favour of more liberal and manly indulgence. And in the expreſſion of ſound, in the intimation it brings, in the ſentiments and feelings, which, independently of arbitrary appointment, it calls up in the human underſtanding, or impreſſes on the human heart, conſiſts the chief importance of thoſe modulations which prevail in different ſyſtems of language.

When the Emperor Charles the Fifth [*E*] ſo pleaſantly characteriſed the ſeveral languages of Europe, this general effect of ſound alone exhauſted the criticiſm. He inſinuated no other compariſon, nor enquired into their artificial fabric. The criterion, however, of a poliſhed tongue ſeems principally to reſide there.

Idiom and analogical texture preſent conſiderations of far greater importance than can be drawn from any general theory of ſound.

After

After a language has arrived at conſiderable refinement, there may be remarked in provincial phraſe, or in the variety of its dialects, the characteriſtics of primitive barbariſm. In this variety, its alliance with manners cannot eſcape the moſt ſuperficial obſerver. For, in the progreſs of a ſtate, the lower ranks often fall back; or at leaſt not moving forward in exact proportion with their ſuperiors, their language, like their manners, remains long nearly ſtationary. The vulgar, accordingly, of the ſame country, almoſt as widely differ in their vocabulary from the more poliſhed, as the more barbarous differ in theirs from the more poliſhed nations; or as the ſame language differs from itſelf in its ſucceſſive ſtages. And from hence a preſumption ariſes, that the diſtinction in queſtion lies not ſo much in ſound, or in grammatical texture, as in the analogy of terms which, in different periods of ſociety,

are engrafted on a different ſtock. At one period there is a coarſeneſs and ruſticity which governs the idioms, runs through the etymology, and adheres to all the alluſions. At another period the alluſions carry us more immediately and directly to the arts of life. In circumſtances ſo diſſimilar, the vocabulary is extended in oppoſite lines, and purſues its progreſs through a different ſeries of analogy.

Suitable to this tendency of things, the rough, the boiſterous, and the loud, the true repreſentatives of barbarians in a cultivated age, are peculiarly averſe from refinement in ſpeech, and diſcover an aptitude and predilection for vulgar alluſions.

Even when the accidents of birth and fortune lead to its more poliſhed forms, it is difficult for art to file off, in this reſpect, the roughneſs of nature; and they relapſe into

into barbariſms better adapted to their mode of thinking, and to the conſtitutional indelicacy of their moral frame. To perſons of an oppoſite deſcription, the groſs alluſions of the vulgar are peculiarly offenſive. A reformation in this point is more or leſs the aim of the civiliſing part of ſociety; till at length the reigning propenſities of one become reigning antipathies in another age.

The ſyſtem of alluſions, therefore, the courſe of etymology, or the *filiation* of words, muſt be variable, in every tongue, with the manners, with the arts, with the turn of thinking among mankind. And beſides theſe intrinſic differences, which riſe up ſyſtematically out of the prevailing ſcheme of thought, words acquire dignity or meanneſs from accidental combinations, and even from the organs through which they paſs. They are ſanctified, if one may ſay ſo, by venerable lips, or contract a ſort of ideal debaſement in the mouths of

the vulgar. And hence the poets of all nations, the firſt refiners of the elements of ſpeech, depart the fartheſt from vulgar phraſe, and even affect a dialect of their own, conſecrated in a peculiar manner to the muſes [*F*].

Such cauſes directly tend to diſcriminate languages, and to fix the degrees of their refinement.

But refinement in language, as in manners, may be exceſſive, or ill governed. And comparative excellence is by no means included in comparative refinement [*G*].

Language, in its earlier forms, has been taxed with an obſcurity, from which it is afterwards exempt. This obſcurity, which reigns in ſome degree in all the languages of antiquity, has been more particularly objected to thoſe of the Eaſt. It ſeems princi-

principally to ariſe from the want of thoſe connective particles whoſe introduction is of a later date. And from hence it ſhould ſeem that *perſpicuity* is a growing virtue. But the criticiſm, if not deſtitute of foundation, muſt be confined, in a great degree, to written compoſition. For, in the act of ſpeaking, the ſuperior vivacity, which accompanies a rude tongue, often ſuperſedes the occaſion of particles, or ſcorns their aid. If then particles, in the fullneſs of their dominion, give only to *perſpicuity* what an inferior animation takes away, there is upon the whole no abſolute gain: and according as you fix the proportion, you refer the virtue to rude or cultivated ſpeech.

Without inſtituting a minute compariſon, it may in general be maintained, that the great excellence of a rude tongue conſiſts, if not in *perſpicuity*, at leaſt in *vivacity*

city and ſtrength. In theſe modes of excellence our moſt remote progenitors far ſurpaſſed us. And the advantages of a cultivated tongue, when oppoſed to theſe, will conſiſt chiefly in copiouſneſs of expreſſion, in the grace of alluſion, and in the combination of more melodious ſound.

An entire union of theſe qualities, with thoſe others, would conſtitute the utmoſt perfection. But the exiſtence of the former, in an eminent degree, is rather incompatible with the latter; and conſequently there is a certain point of refinement from which all languages begin to decline [*H*].

In forming a particular eſtimate, the inherent advantages and diſadvantages of grammatical texture would alſo deſerve attention. It is the genius of ſome to admit of inflexion, and conſequently of tranſpoſition, and a vaſt latitude of arrangement.

ment. Others, circumſcribed by particles, admit of no variety of order.

The one ſyſtem is more fertile of harmony and elegance, and even of ſtrength; and by operating more ſucceſsfully on the imagination, ſeems better adapted to the purpoſes of eloquence and polite literature. The other ſyſtem, more allied to perſpicuity and preciſion, is, on that account, more approved by the underſtanding as a commodious vehicle for philoſophy and the ſciences. Any greater latitude of arrangement, than that permitted in the Greek and Latin, might probably be deſtructive of perſpicuity. Any cloſer confinement, than that required in the French and Italian, might be deſtructive of elegance and force. In perſpicuity, the Engliſh tongue is perhaps ſuperior both to the Greek and Latin, while it falls conſiderably ſhort of the French. In elegance and force it is more

perfect

perfect than the French, while infinitely inferior to the Greek and Latin.

The German is an example of a language which admits of large tranſpoſition, while cuſtom exacts much uniformity in the arrangement of words. Should the Germans then ever arrive at that elegance and taſte which diſtinguiſhed the politer ages of Greece and Rome, their writers would indulge in a variety of arrangement hitherto unprecedented, and which, though not repugnant to the fundamentals of their grammar, muſt wait the ſlow variation of idiom, the ſanction of cuſtom and eſtabliſhed uſe.

> Quem penes arbitrium eſt, & jus, & norma loquendi.

Such innovations, however, would be juſtly numbered among the ornaments of ſpeech, and the refinements of a poliſhed age. And other languages more melodiouſly

diouſly conſtructed, equally adorned, and ſuſceptible, perhaps, in other reſpects of ſuperior refinements, may be debarred, by *the fundamental laws and conſtitution of their* grammar, *from* ſuch eventual tranſitions.

But the critical examination of ſuch particulars, or of the comparative excellence of ancient and modern tongues, belongs to the grammarian, or philologiſt, not to a writer who looks through their province into the progreſs of manners, and the viciſſitude of civil life.

NOTES.

NOTE [*A*], p. 110.

THE language of the Hottentots, though not abſolutely deſtitute of articulation, is, however, defective in this quality. And the language of the Troglodytes, a ſavage people, who ſubſiſted in ancient Egypt, reſembled, according to Herodotus, the ſhrieking of bats, and conſiſted of no articulate ſounds. But in this inſtance, as in that of the Hottentots, and other ſavage nations, it is probable there is not a total abſence of the quality, but only a more imperfect articulation, which requires ſome acquaintance with the language to render it palpable to ſenſe.

NOTE [*B*], p. 112.

THE celebrated Signora Gabrieli, whoſe power of voice is ſo various and bewitching, is conſcious of the irreſiſtible influence of phyſical

physical causes on her exertions. They disarm her occasionally of the power to excel, and account for that reluctance to perform, which is generally ascribed to caprice alone.

See Brydone's Tour.

NOTE [C], p. 115.

THE anecdote of Atheas king of Scythia is thus related by Plutarch:

Ἀτεας——ισμηνιαν δε, τον ἀριστον ἀυλητην, λαβων, ἀιχμαλωτον, εκελευσεν ἀυλησαι. θαυμαζοντων δε των ἀλλων, ἀυτος ὠμοσεν ἡδιον ακȣειν τȣ ἱππȣ χρεμετιζοντος.

Plut. in Apophth.

It may even be questioned, whether the accomplished king of Macedon himself, though susceptible of musical gratification beyond the reach of a Scythian, had a full relish of the performances of the great master he affected to admire. But it was the policy of Philip to countenance at his court, a degree of refinement in the elegant and polite arts, which was little adapted to the circumstances of Macedon, though highly worthy of a prince who had annexed his kingdom to the Hellenic body, and

aſpired to the ſovereignty of nations highly civilized.

The Macedonians held a ſort of middle ſtation between the Grecian and Barbarian world. Rude, when compared with the Greeks; cultivated and refined, when compared with the Scythian nations.

NOTE [*D*], p. 115.

THOUGH muſical expreſſion is certainly relative to the peculiar ideas of a people, it cannot hence be inferred, that there is no ground of abſolute preference in judging of the muſic of nations. All languages, in their peculiar idioms, have ſuch a reference, yet a judgment may be formed concerning their comparative perfection. But to inſtitute ſuch compariſon belongs not to the crowd.

"The admiration," ſays a late popular writer, "pretended to be given to foreign muſic in "Britain is, in general, deſpicable affectation. "In Italy we ſee the natives tranſported at the "opera with all that variety of delight and "paſſion which the compoſer intended to pro-"duce. The ſame opera in England is ſeen

"with

" with the moſt remarkable liſtleſſneſs and in-
" attention. It can raiſe no paſſion in the
" audience, becauſe they do not underſtand the
" language in which it is written."

The ſame writer, after enumerating ſeveral cauſes which conferred pre-eminence on the muſic of the ancients, proceeds to obſerve, " That
" if we were to recover the muſic which once
" had ſo much power in the early periods of the
" Greek ſtates, it might have no ſuch charms
" for modern ears as ſome great admirers of
" antiquity imagine "

Gregory's Comparative View.

The extent of theſe charms, we will preſume to add, even for the ears of Greeks, is magnified beyond the truth. It can hardly be imagined, that their muſical education was eſſential to public morals, or to the frame of their governments; though it might contribute, in ſome degree, to ſway the genius of the youth, to counterbalance the tendency of their gymnaſtic exerciſes, and to heighten the ſenſibilities of that refined and ingenious people.

NOTE [*E*], p. 118.

FRANCESE ad un amico—Tudeſco al ſuo cavallo—Italiano alla ſua ſignora—Spagnuolo a Dio—Ingleſe a gli uccelli.

This apothegm, like an imperial edict, has been ringing, for above two centuries, in the ears of Europe. Though rather pleaſant than ſerious, it intimates from high authority the general effects of ſound. Serious criticiſm, on the ſtructure of the European languages, leads to more important diſtinctions, founded in the diverſity of national character.

"It is certain," ſays Addiſon, "that the "light, talkative genius of the French has not "a little infected their tongue, which might "be ſhewn by many inſtances; as the genius "of the Italians, which is ſo much addicted to "muſic and ceremony, has moulded all their "words and phraſes to thoſe particular uſes. "The ſtateline's and gravity of the Spaniards "ſhews itſelf to perfection, in the ſolemnity of "their language; and the blunt, honeſt humour "of the Germans ſounds better in the rough-

"neſs

" neſs of the high Dutch, than it would in a " politer tongue."

Spectator, No. 135.

NOTE [*F*], p. 122.

THE embelliſhment of a poetic dialect is eminently conſpicuous in the Greek and Latin; the languages ancient and modern moſt eminent for every ſpecies of refinement.

Whatever theory is embraced concerning the origin of this dialect among the Greeks, the advantages hence derived to the Greek muſe are univerſally acknowledged. And the advantages derived to the Italian muſe, from the ſame fountain, are thus deſcribed by Mr. Addiſon in his Remarks on Italy.

" The Italian poets, beſides the celebrated " ſmoothneſs of their tongue, have a particular " advantage above the writers of other na- " tions in the difference of their poetical and " proſe language. There are indeed ſets of " phraſes that in all countries are peculiar to " the poets; but, among the Italians, there " are not only ſentences, but a multitude

" of particular words that never enter into " common diſcourſe. They have ſuch a dif- " ferent turn and poliſhing for poetical uſe, " that they drop ſeveral of their letters, and " appear in another form when they come to " be arranged in verſe. For this reaſon, the Ita- " lian opera ſeldom ſinks into a poorneſs of " language, but amidſt all the meanneſs, and " familiarity of the thoughts, has ſomething " beautiful and ſonorous in the expreſſion. " Without this natural advantage of the tongue, " their preſent poetry would appear wretchedly " low and vulgar, notwithſtanding the many " ſtrained allegories that are ſo much in uſe " amongſt the writers of this nation."

Thus far Mr. Addiſon. Suitable to the deſign of this note, it may farther be obſerved, that the Provençal tongue, embelliſhed by the happy genius of the Troubadours, was, during a period of two centuries, the moſt approved of any in Europe. It was the forming hand of Dante, that firſt gave ſo fine a poliſh to the Italian as rendered it ſuperior to the Provençal, at a time when the Spaniſh and French were emerging more ſlowly from barbariſm.

See Millot's Hiſtory of the Troubadours.

The

The Engliſh tongue cannot indeed boaſt of a poetic dialect of equal advantage with that of the Greek or Italian, yet is it not unacquainted with a ſimilar ſpecies of refinement. The merit of ſuch refinement is eminently Dryden's, who ſelected, with peculiar delicacy, ſo many flowing and ſonorous words, and appropriated them excluſively to the muſes.

"There was," ſays his biographer and critic, "before the time of Dryden, no poetical dic-"tion, no ſyſtem of words at once refined from "the groſſneſs of domeſtic uſe, and free from "the harſhneſs of terms appropriated to parti-"cular arts. Words too familiar or too re-"mote, defeat the purpoſe of a poet. From "thoſe ſounds which we hear on ſmall or "coarſe occaſions, we do not eaſily receive "ſtrong impreſſions or delightful images; and "words to which we are nearly ſtrangers, when-"ever they occur, draw that attention on them-"ſelves, which they ſhould convey to things.

"Thoſe happy combinations of words, which "diſtinguiſh poetry from proſe, had been rarely "attempted; we had few elegancies or flowers "of ſpeech; the roſes had not yet been plucked

" from the bramble, or different colours had " not been joined to enliven one another."

Waller and Denham, it will readily be owned by every cultivator of Engliſh literature, claim on the ſame account a due proportion of praiſe. But Dryden, certainly, has eclipſed their fame.

> Waller was ſmooth; but Dryden taught to join
> The varying verſe, the full reſounding line,
> The long majeſtic march, and energy divine.

NOTE [G], p. 122.

THE ſimple and original qualities of ſtyle, conſidered as an object to the underſtanding, the imagination, the paſſions, and the ear, are reduced by Dr. *Campbel, in the Philoſophy of Rhetoric*, to five, *perſpicuity*, *vivacity*, *elegance*, *animation*, and *muſic*.

If of theſe qualities perſpicuity is, as it ſurely is, the moſt eſſential, the aptitude of a language to promote perſpicuity, would ſeem to conſtitute its chief perfection. But we may apply, perhaps, to perſpicuity, which is the firſt end of ſpeech, what is applicable to ſome of the moral virtues.

virtues. The abſence of the virtue implies the moſt palpable defect; its preſence is no capital excellence.

Beſides, the caſes of ſtyle and of a language are not exactly parallel. In judging of the one, we pronounce on the execution; in judging of the other, rather on the materials. The architect may not always be reſponſible for the materials with which he builds. A language full of perſpicuity, within a narrow province, may, from the ſcantineſs of the vocabulary, be without variety, or compaſs, or extent.

As to the analyſis of ſtyle, it is foreign to this diſcuſſion. But if, ſo curious a ſubject ſhould appear intereſting to the reader, we can refer him with pleaſure to the work above mentioned, which enters into minute as well as important diſtinctions, and which entitles its author to no inferior rank among the critics and metaphyſicians of the preſent age.

NOTE [*H*], p. 124.

WHEN a language has touched the higheſt point of attainable perfection, it is open to corruption from various ſources, which no human ſagacity is able fully to explore.

It can be ſhewn from the doctrine of combinations, that it is poſſible, in the nature of things, for a language to *exhauſt itſelf*, ſo as to be utterly incapable of preſenting any *new* idea to the human underſtanding.

In any ſyſtem of words, the various combinations, and combination of combinations, cannot be infinite. But though not *infinite*, they are, it muſt be owned, *indefinite*; and therefore, the ſuppoſition we have made, is barely poſſible in the conception of the mind. Something, however, actually approaching to this takes place, to a certain degree, in a highly cultivated tongue, and is a principal cauſe of its decline.

Modes of ſpeech, the moſt elegant and adorned, by returning often upon the ear, are liable

liable to be anticipated, or ceaſe to afford their wonted gratification. To aim therefore at new, though inferior forms of excellence, becomes an object in an age of refinement. Words of ſingular fabric, foreign idioms, and combinations leſs familiar to the public ear, are ſought after with avidity. The genius of the language is tortured; and the love of novelty and variety produces a conſtant deviation from the pureſt models.

The corruption ariſing from this principle, was realized among the Romans after the Auguſtan age, and begins perhaps to be realized in the preſent period of Engliſh literature.

ESSAY IV.

OF THE CRITERION OF CIVILIZED MANNERS.

THE epithets *barbarous* and *civiliſed* occur ſo frequently in converſation and in books, that whoever employs his thoughts in contemplation of the manners and hiſtory of mankind, will have occaſion to conſider, with ſome attention, both what ideas theſe words are commonly meant to convey, and in what ſenſe they ought to be employed by the hiſtorian and moral philoſopher.

It is of ſome importance ſurely, in every diſcuſſion relative to human affairs, to have aſcertained before-hand what are thoſe qualities in the manners and characters of different

different nations, which, according to the eſtimation of reaſon, after an impartial ſurvey of mankind, as they are and have been, may juſtify the impoſition of names implying almoſt unlimited cenſure or applauſe.

Perhaps, on examination, it will not appear that any ſimple criterion of civilization and barbarity, taken either from laws, or manners, or any other circumſtance in human affairs, can be fixed upon, as ariſing from the general uſe which is made of theſe terms, and fitted to explain their application in particular caſes.

That civilization, ſo highly extolled, is plainly underſtood by its admirers to be ſomewhat of a mixed and complicated nature, comprehending various conſtituent parts, ſome eſſential to its very exiſtence, ſome only acceſſory and ornamental. In the total abſence of the former of theſe,

Barbarity,

Barbarity, according to the general acceptation of the word, ſeems to be underſtood to conſiſt.

Warm and ſteady affections in private life, an honourable fidelity to engagements, whether expreſs or implied, the order of internal laws, equity and humanity in their conduct toward ſtrangers, and foreign nations, will be inſiſted upon by all as eſſential to the character of a civilized people. The ſciences, and fine arts, though not indiſpenſably eſſential, muſt be eſteemed very requiſite: yet is not their influence exempted from ſome uncertainty and ſuſpicion.

The cultivation of real ſcience, the love and ſtudy of the fine arts, while uncorrupted, add, no doubt, to the politeneſs, and improve the enjoyments of civilized

civilized nations; but an attachment to falſe ſciences (ſeveral of which, like aſtrology and magic, unſuſpected while they flouriſh, have prevailed, and perhaps prevail), or a paſſion for ſpurious and groteſque imitations of the fine arts, as pantomimes, puppet-ſhows, maſquerades, or the laboured decoration of gardens and parterres, cannot improve, and may degrade and impair the juſt eſtimation of thoſe nations by whom they are cheriſhed.

The vulgar and commercial arts, ſubſervient to the plenty, accommodation, and elegance of ordinary life, ſeem almoſt of an indifferent nature.

Although by theſe the manners of civilized nations may be embelliſhed, yet the higheſt degrees of generous virtue, and the trueſt politeneſs of mind, may be found among nations to whom theſe are almoſt totally unknown.

If

If this be a full enumeration of the qualities which, in the general ſenſe of mankind, are underſtood to conſtitute civilized manners, and a juſt account of their reſpective importance; it deſerves to be adverted to, that no nation has ever poſſeſſed them all in their higheſt excellence, nor has any ſubſiſted as a people (ſhort periods of convulſion and anarchy excepted) without a very conſiderable degree of one or more of thoſe which are to be accounted moſt eſſential.

Were it not then better to ſet aſide from correct reaſoning the too general terms of *barbarous* and *civilized*, ſubſtituting in their room expreſſions of more definite cenſure and approbation?

Indeed the common acceptation of theſe words is founded upon a very general, but very falſe and partial opinion of the ſtate of mankind. It ſup-

poſes that the difference between one nation and another may be prodigiouſly great; that ſome happy and diſtinguiſhed tribes of men are, in all reſpects, generous, liberal, refined, and humane; while others, from their hard fate, or their perverſeneſs, remain in all reſpects illiberal, miſchievous, and rude.

This general ſuppoſition with regard to the condition of human nature, is implied in that opinion of their own ſuperiority over other nations which Europeans are prone to entertain: a ſuperiority which, like that aſſumed by the Greeks, the Romans, and the Chineſe, is ſuppoſed by thoſe who claim it to be abſolute and immenſe; yet, if brought to the ſtandard of virtue and felicity, it may appear very inconſiderable in reſpect of the populous Aſiatic nations, who have flouriſhed long under extenſive monarchies, and not very great in reſpect even of the ſimpleſt and

rudeſt

rudeſt race of men inhabiting the frozen ſhores of Greenland, or placed beneath the fervour of a vertical ſun, along the Guinea coaſt, or on the Banks of the Orinoco.

It ought to be ſuppoſed that, if other nations were as far inferior to us, as we are willing to imagine, their condition would evidently tend to decay and extermination. With regard to the inferior orders of being, both animal and vegetable, it ſeems to be a law of nature, that, wherever they cannot attain, in ſome very conſiderable degree, the honours, if I may ſo ſpeak, and the emoluments of their exiſtence, there they gradually decline, and at laſt ceaſe to exiſt at all. Is man an exception from the general law? or may it not rather be believed, that, wherever any tribes of mankind ſubſiſt, and do not manifeſtly decay and haſten to extermination, there, though appearances belie it, they muſt have attained a meaſure of worth

and of felicity not much inferior to that which the moſt admired nations have actually attained?

The opinions of the vulgar ſuggeſted by inſtinctive propenſities, not formed by reaſoning, always aſcribe to the progreſs of ſcience and of art, wherever they have once apprehended the idea of this progreſs, a ſuperiority of the moſt deciſive kind, in all that is fortunate and deſirable in the lot of man. But ſpeculative reaſoners are not wholly agreed on this head.

The greater number indeed have embraced, and by their eloquence they illuſtrate and enforce, this opinion ſo natural to the crowd, and, with them, they extol this progreſs as eſſential to the very exiſtence of the human character.

But of late a few *, not inferior in ſagacity to any, and more inquiſitive per-

* Rouſſeau, and thoſe who have embraced his opinions.

haps, in this research, than those who have followed the generally received opinion, have found reason to decry this progress as the fertile source of corruption, debasement and infelicity.

Between these opposite opinions the truth, as in many other cases, will probably be found. The beneficial influence of this progress is real, yet far inferior to what the panegyrists of science and art have represented it to be, and just barely enough to reward that continual pursuit which it solicits from every nation once engaged in this career.

It will not however follow, if the condition of the most improved and refined nations be admitted very little to excel in felicity or worth the simplest and rudest tribes of men, that the inducements to further progress in pursuit of improvement are taken away, or indeed diminished.

To nations of men, as to individuals, it happens often, that they are allured by the ſplendor of a diſtant object, to purſue it with more ardour than it appears on attainment to have deſerved. They are then apt to complain of fallacious appearances, and to wonder that the ſyſtem, of which they are a part, ſhould expoſe them to ſuch deluſions. But though their induſtry may have been rouſed and excited by a certain degree of deluſive ſplendor, without the charms of which it might not have been awakened at all, they are never cheated of its proper reward.

Some real good, however inferior to that exhibited, or different from it, is generally obtained at the cloſe of every purſuit; and whatever may appear deficient then, has been before enjoyed in detail, as it accompanied the progreſs of their endeavours.

Were

Were indeed both the progreſſive reward of well-directed induſtry, and that which is obtained at the termination of its endeavours, much inferior to their uſual amount, one powerful reaſon would ſtill remain to impel mankind to the purſuit of every attainable object, and to make them aſpire after every apparent improvement of their actual condition, whatever it may be.

——— Omnia fatis
In pejus ruere, ac retro ſublapſa referri,
Ni vis humana———

The ſilent courſe of time is continually taking away from that which we poſſeſs, and from the high perfection of whatever we have cultivated and refined. Nothing ever ſtands ſtill. If progreſs is not made, we muſt decline from the good ſtate already attained, and as it is ſcarcely ever in our power to replace the work of time and of chance in thoſe very reſpects in which

they have impaired your condition, we ought to endeavour to compenſate theſe inevitable loſſes, by the acquiſition of thoſe other advantages and augmentations of good, which the ſame courſe of things brings forward to our view, and ſeems to preſent to us as the object of reaſonable deſire.

ESSAY V.

OF THE RANK OF NATIONS, AND THE REVOLUTIONS OF FORTUNE.

THE philoſopher, who ſtudies human nature in the cloſet, will be aſtoniſhed when he looks abroad into life, and examines, by his theory, the conduct of mankind.

Yet to him who, in the courſe of obſervation, and in the commerce of active life, has learned to make no ſerious appeals to his own conſtitution, the hiſtory of the world will be no leſs dark and myſterious.

The one is deficient in experience, the other in reflexion; and both alike unqua-

lified

lified to judge conſiſtently of the human character.

Had there reigned from the beginning an exact ſimilarity among men, *laws had* been unneceſſary, and government without all foundation. A wide diſſimilarity, on the other hand, muſt have indiſpoſed them for ſociety, and rendered them incongruous parts of the ſame ſyſtem.

Diſtinctions then there are, and ought to be. But theſe, at firſt few and inconſiderable, have grown immenſe in the revolutions of time; and the natural hiſtory of the ſpecies is ſcarce able to ſolve the appearances in civil life.

The operation of climate, in the production of theſe appearances, ſeems to have been magnified by the Greeks and Romans. The genius of the Aſiatics was ſuppoſed to diſappear in the climates of Europe,

Europe, and the genius of Europe to evaporate in the climates of Asia. Thus the genius of the human mind seemed to *fluctuate with every migration, and to gravitate to the soil [A].*

Mechanical and local causes, which, in some respects, so visibly predominate, the imagination invests with a dominion that reaches the very essence of our frame. Hence the mutual contempt of nations. Hence the rank which Europe, at this day, usurps over all the communities of mankind.

She affects to move in another orbit from the rest of the species. She is even offended with the idea of a common descent; and rather than acknowledge her ancestors to have been co-ordinate only to other races of Barbarians, and in parallel circumstances, she breaks the unity of the system, and, by imagining specific differences among men, precludes or abrogates their common claims.

According

According to this theory, the oppreſſion or extermination of a meaner race, will no longer be ſo ſhocking to humanity. Their diſtreſſes will not call upon us ſo loudly for relief. And public morality, and the laws of nations, will be confined to a few regions peopled with this more exalted ſpecies of mankind.

Upon the diſcovery of America, doubts were entertained whether the natives of that country ought not to be accounted a race of the Ourang Outangs. But the infallible edict of a Roman pontiff ſoon eſtabliſhed their doubtful pedigree [*B*]; and our right of dominion, in both hemiſpheres, was aſſerted, on other pretences, by the caſuiſts of thoſe days.

The inveſtiture of America was conferred on Ferdinand and Iſabella by Pope Alexander the Sixth.

In general all countries diſcovered to the weſt of a meridian line, were by this pope aſſigned to the Spaniards, as all diſcovered to the caſt of this line were declared, by the ſame authority, to be veſted in the Portugueſe.

It became accordingly a queſtion afterwards between the two crowns of Spain and Portugal, to which of them the Molucca Iſlands ſhould belong. For it had not occurred to this arbiter of the rights of kings, that the grants were as nonſenſical as unjuſt, and that the eaſtern and weſtern navigators might poſſibly interfere in taking poſſeſſion of their reſpective allotments. But the court of Rome, which authoriſed ſo abſurd a partition of empire, vindicated, during another pontificate, the honours of the Indian race. The thunder of the Vatican was heard, for once, on the ſide of humanity; and Europe, in the ſixteenth century, was permitted only to

uſurp the ſovereignty, not to inſult the pedigree, of nations.

The theory, then, we have mentioned, is, in its utmoſt extent, of more modern invention. But the opinions which lead to it are of high antiquity; and, being congenial with the paſſions of a divided world, have reſiſted the experience of ages. There is ſcarce any folly or vice, ſays a late author *, more epidemical among the ſons of men, than that ridiculous and hurtful vanity, by which the people of each country are apt to prefer themſelves to thoſe of every other; and to make their own cuſtoms and manners and opinions the ſtandards of right and wrong, of true and falſe. The ſame propenſity, ſays another author †, is the moſt remarkable in the whole deſcription of mankind.

* Letters on the Study of Hiſtory, p. 29.

† Hiſtory of Civil Society, p. 145.

Nations

National vanity is indeed confined to no æra in civil life. If the epithets *Greek* and *Barbarian* are opposed to each other in the *Greek* tongue, epithets, exactly equivalent, are opposed to each other in an *Indian* tongue, spoken on the coast of Labrador; and, in general, the names by which the rude American tribes wish to be distinguished, are assumed from an idea of their own pre-eminence *. If the learned Chinese were mortified with the figure their empire made in the general map of the world, the poor natives of Congo pronounce themselves highly favoured among mortals: and the most wretched of African tribes solace themselves, under all their misfortunes, with the fond persuasion that, whithersoever they go, they shall, one day, return, in life or in death, to their native shores.

* History of America, vol. i. p. 412

Such partiality, when not carried into an extreme, anſwers a noble end: and the pureſt patriotiſm is often founded on local circumſtances, and a predilection for eſtabliſhed forms. But that preference of affection to our own country, which is the true definition of patriotiſm, is compatible, ſurely, with ſuitable regard and allowances for the various aſpects of humanity.

Profound ignorance, and a contrariety, or repugnancy of cuſtoms and manners, account for that averſion, or contempt for ſtrangers and foreigners, implied in the partial ſentiments of ſavage and untutored tribes. No information, no experience, no conviction can always conquer early prejudice: and the Hottentot, who returned from Europe, relapſed, we may believe, with all imaginable eaſe, perhaps with additional ſatisfaction, into the eſtabliſhed habits of his country.

But

But ſuch examples are balanced by others of an oppoſite nature, no leſs remarkable, which hiſtory preſents to our view: examples of docility, of emulation, of magnanimous preference. Some of theſe it will be proper to recite, if we would not belie the character of the ruder ages.

The Romans, while yet a rude people, diſdained not to appoint an embaſſy to enquire into the juriſprudence of the Greeks, and to ſupply, from that fountain, the deficiencies in their civil code.

This embaſſy ſeems to have been ſuggeſted by Hermodorus, an exiled citizen of Epheſus, who afterwards eminently aſſiſted in interpreting the collection of laws brought from Greece. His public ſervices met with a public reward. A ſtatue was erected to him in the Comitia at the public expence: an honour which the jealouſy of Rome would have denied to a ſtranger

in a leſs generous age. But, at this period, ſhe acted from a noble impulſe; and the ſtatue erected to Hermodorus was erected, in reality, to her own honour. Yet the name of this Epheſian, which caſts a luſtre upon Rome, ſeemed to caſt a ſhade upon his native city; and that people, according to Heraclitus, deſerved to have been extirpated, to a man, who had condemned ſuch a citizen to exile [C].

The Romans, in other inſtances, were capable of acting with the ſame humble dignity.

They diſdained not to refer to the court of Areopagus at Athens, the deciſion of ſuch queſtions as were too complex or intricate for their own tribunals. This reference, that embaſſy, may ſeem worthy of a people who were deſtined, one day, to be the rulers of mankind. But the policy of rude nations, though ſeldom called into view

view unleſs by that fortune which renders their poſterity illuſtrious, is often, we may believe, conducted with the ſame ſpirit.

In the reign of Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius, references, from the fierceſt barbarians, to Rome, were not uncommon. And there occurs an example of policy, in modern ages, leſs celebrated indeed, but more liberal, perhaps, and magnanimous than any recorded in Roman annals. It relates to religion, an object certainly the moſt ſublime and intereſting that can enter into public councils and deliberations.

A duke of Ruſſia, while his ſubjects were yet pagans, ſent abroad commiſſioners to inform themſelves, on the ſpot, concerning the religion of Rome, the religion of the Greek church, and the religion of Mahomet, that he might determine, upon the report of theſe commiſſioners, which of theſe ſeveral religions it became him to

embrace and eſtabliſh, as the guardian of his people. So much modeſty in acknowledging domeſtic inſufficiency; ſo much candour in weighing the pretenſions of foreign inſtitutions, are rarely to be met with in the proceedings of nations reputed civilized. And if we compare the ſentiments which thoſe under a different ſtate of the arts are diſpoſed to entertain, we ſhall find that undiſtinguiſhing contempt, though mutual in ſome reſpects, ſubſiſts between them by no means in an equal degree. It is commonly mitigated, on the one ſide, by credulity and admiration, to which the ruder nations are peculiarly prone [*D*]; while it is heightened, on the other, by antipathies, which the pageantry of rank, and the exterior of poliſhed life, are apt to inſpire.

The congreſs of mankind, at Conſtantinople, during the period of the cruſades, opened perhaps a fairer field for this compariſon,

parſon, than any other occurrence in the annals of the world. Various people in different ſtages of civil culture, convened, as it were, at a general rendezvous, and paſſing in review before each other, muſt have impreſſed the mind with emotions and ſentiments correſponding to the variety of their conditions. Hiſtorians, ſpectators of the ſcene, and animated with the paſſions of their contemporaries, have deſcribed the impreſſion of this ſingular interview; and from the deſcriptions of theſe hiſtorians we may collect the judgment of nations.

The Greeks exulting in their unrivalled ſuperiority in arts, looked down on all the ſtrangers aſſembled in their capital, with ſupercilious contempt, and, on ſome, even with deteſtation. The Latins, on the other hand, and in general the ruder ſtrangers of the Weſt, with more modeſt ideas of their own accompliſhments, recognized a degree of refinement in manners and in arts, ſo

far ſuperior to their own, and regarded with an admiration approaching to enthuſiaſm, the ſplendor and magnificence of the Greek empire.

The leaders of the cruſades, accordingly, on their return from the Holy Land, abandoned in ſome ſort the ruſticity of their manners, and aimed at ſome reformation in the taſte and ſciences of Europe. And to theſe wild expeditions, ſays an admired hiſtorian*, the effect of ſuperſtition or folly, we owe the firſt gleams of light, which tended to diſpel barbarity and ignorance.

In general it may be affirmed, that rude nations are touched with ſome degree of reverence or admiration at the ſight of dignified appearances; that they honour, at ſome diſtance, that ſtate of the arts towards which they are tending; and that it is only in caſes where the diſtance is too immenſe for their proſpect or

* Hiſtory of Charles V. vol. i.

conception,

conception, that they acquiesce in their condition with an apparent insensibility, and allow their superiors to possess unenvied greatness.

The Saracens, notwithstanding the desolation of literature at Alexandria, which marked their first conquests, soon appeared in the scene, as its most zealous champions. Eager to preserve, as before active to destroy, they cultivated its precious remains with unexampled ardour. A novelty was even to appear in public negociations: a people contending for erudition as for empire, and actually demanding the works of the antients, by express articles, in treaties with the Greek emperors [*E*].

Modesty is consistent with the most aspiring views. It is the actual possession of refinement and civil arts, not the efforts made towards acquiring them, which engenders extravagance and conceit. A few

frivolous, or at beſt ornamental diſtinctions, are miſtaken for real differences: and if we ſurvey the circle of human things, the illuſions of vanity, and the inſolence of pride, will be found moſt inherent to nations and to ages intoxicated with proſperity and affluence.

Commerce, the boaſt of modern policy, by enlarging the ſphere of obſervation and experience, promiſed to undeceive the world, and to diffuſe more liberal and equal ſentiments through the ſeveral parts of an extended ſyſtem. But commerce, it is to be feared, has, in ſome inſtances, been productive of the very contrary effects; and by expoſing, if I may ſay ſo, the nakedneſs of ſociety, and uniting, in one proſpect, its moſt diſtant extremes, has heightened the inſolence of nations, and rendered their original and natural equality, to a ſuperficial obſerver, more incredible.

In

In judging of nations, as well as of individuals, our obſervations are more frequently directed to circumſtances of pomp and outward ſplendor, than to intrinſic excellence. And countries, accordingly, where no ſuch appearances are to be found, we too haſtily conclude to be the manſions of people, who, from a natural inferiority of talent, are incapable of producing them.

This concluſion was drawn firſt by the Egyptians, and afterwards by the Greeks. The Greeks, more eſpecially, regarded their own country as the ſeat of every perfection; and policy, and refinement, and arts, as their excluſive privilege.

Extravagant as the opinion now appears, it was the opinion of free and of poliſhed ſtates, in the meridian of their courſe. It was ſupported by a compariſon with the neighbouring nations; nor then, perhaps, directly

directly contradicted or disproved by any authentic memorials.

Such presumption was more excusable in the antients; but having been, long since, reprobated by the fullest experience, ought to afford a lesson of wisdom and moderation to all succeeding ages.

When it is observed that, in proportion to the age of the world, the known regions of civility are of larger extent; it is not being too sanguine to expect, that, in the lapse of time, the whole habitable globe shall be found compatible with the same improvements.

What avails it that experience refutes so amply the errors of past times, if it corrects not our judgment of the future, nor disengages the mind from the dominion of its former prejudices?

Could the perpetual greatneſs of one people be ſet in oppoſition to the perpetual meanneſs of another, the plea of natural pre-eminence were exceedingly ſpecious. But it is great conjunctures only which form great men; and there are certain periods in the annals of the moſt diſtinguiſhed nations, wherein they appear in no degree ſuperior to their contemporaries.

In that long interval, which elapſed from the age of Alexander to the conqueſt of Greece by the Romans, there is ſcarcely an Athenian of eminence upon record. And the obſervation, with a few exceptions, is applicable, perhaps, to the whole of Greece, from the above age as far down as the Achæan league, when Agis, and Cleomenes of Sparta, and Aratus, and Philopæmen give us ſome idea of their illuſtrious anceſtors.

When

When we revolve, therefore, the riſe and decline of nations, and the fluctuating character of the ſame people at different æras, we muſt neceſſarily allow to mankind, in thoſe countries at leaſt which have been the principal ſcene of civil hiſtory, an equal rank and importance in the ſcale of being.

Let us then examine the plea of humble and unaſpiring nations, not hitherto ſuppoſed to have emerged into diſtinction, or to have touched the neareſt verge of ſcience and the liberal arts. Conſtituted ſo long in circumſtances ſo far beneath the ſtandard of our ideas, it may be deemed not unreaſonable to impute to *them*, an original inferiority of nature, or a degradation of rank, occaſioned by the infallible operation of phyſical laws.

Were the facts fully aſcertained, and otherwiſe inexplicable, ſuch concluſion might be embraced and warranted upon

the

the principles of ſound philoſophy. But the facts are deſtitute of evidence; and, even if we admitted their reality, a train of theſe hypotheſes would be neceſſary to ſolve the hiſtory of the world.

Let us carry our imagination back to an æra more antient than the birth of arts. Let us then ſuppoſe an obſerver, of profound diſcernment, to predict, from a ſeries of calculation, the eventual fortune of the world, excluſively of all regard to ſoil or climate, or at leaſt to the ſuppoſed influence of the heavens on the human mind. His ſagacity, perhaps, might not determine where civil arts ſhould firſt ariſe, or ſhine forth with the fulleſt luſtre: yet far, ſurely, from expecting them, in all countries, to be coincident in their origin, or to flouriſh, at once, in the ſame degree, he would expect conſiderable intervals between the arrival of different people at points of equal advancement.

So various are the cauſes which concur to the full eſtabliſhment of regular and well-conſtituted government; that no evidence deciſive of the relative capacity of any people could be derived from the commencement of their civil æra. Even after the firſt movements have been ſucceſsfully made, there are a thouſand diſaſters, which may annoy a political conſtitution, in its infancy or early youth, and not ſuffer its principles to ripen into perfection. Circumſtances in no degree affecting the genius of a people, are often ſufficient to circumſcribe their progreſs; and conſiſtently with the full ſtrength and vigour of the human powers, the reign of ignorance and ſimplicity may endure for ages.

Although great attainments indeed imply great talents, the want of talent is not implied in diſappointment. In the reſearches, for inſtance, of ſcience and philoſophy,

loſophy, the moderns have not only equalled, but ſurpaſſed the antients: yet who, upon this foundation, will arraign the genius of antiquity?

Fortune governs events: and the magnitude of genius or capacity, in individuals or in tribes, cannot be fully eſtimated by the ſucceſs of its exertions. Even the actual promoters of the moſt important intereſts of mankind have ſeldom anticipated, in idea, the progreſſive conſequences of their own plans. In eſtimating human attainments, their origin, progreſs, and perfection, muſt not be totally aſcribed to human wiſdom. And, with all due honour to the memory of our forefathers, this judgment may be pronounced on all the arts, ſciences, and governments they have delivered down to poſterity;

—— Quod divum promittere nemo
Auderet, volvenda dies en attulit ultro!

But,

But, if the approaches to civility are eaſily made, whence then, it may be aſked, have we ſo many embarraſſing theories concerning the origin of language, the riſe of political union, and the eſſential arrangements of ſocial life? While ſuch proceedings, in the judgment of the learned, ſeem to exhauſt all human wiſdom and ingenuity, is it not, in reality, more wonderful to find ſo many nations already emerged from obſcurity, within the compaſs of a few thouſand years, than to find ſo many others ſtill hovering on the confines of a ſtate of nature?

But, in farther illuſtration of this point, let us indulge a few arbitrary ſuppoſitions.

Let us ſuppoſe the number of men, to whom the high prerogative of conducting a people eventually within the line of civilized life, is to the reſt of the ſpecies in a certain fixed proportion.

Let

Let the chance of ſuch men being placed in circumſtances, favourable to the enterprize, form another proportion. And in circumſtances thus favourable, let the chance againſt diſappointment by natural or violent death, or other contingency, form likewiſe an element in the problem. Then, by compounding theſe proportions, it follows that one only, out of a determinate number of men, is born to execute this great deſign.

Now let us imagine the earth already peopled before civilization began, and that the number upon earth, at any one time, is equal or inferior to the number which reſults from the above proportions; then, judging from the probability of things, one or more generations muſt paſs away, after the earth is fully peopled, before civilization is any where introduced. And, after its introduction into any one corner, the numbers in the uncivilized part of the

earth, being then leſs than the whole ſpecies, ſtill more generations, commencing from the former æra, muſt paſs away, before the æra of civility to any other people.

In proportion therefore to the nations already emerged, the chance for the emerging of any new people muſt conſtantly decreaſe.

The computation indeed ſuppoſes no intercourſe between the civilized and the barbarous nations. By reaſon of that intercourſe the chance of extending civility riſes, no doubt, in an eminent degree. Hence, with regard to countries poſſeſſing intercourſe, the progreſs may be exceedingly rapid. But in the other, and ſequeſtered corners of the globe, calculation determines, that there is a growing chance againſt the appearance of a cultivated or poliſhed nation. And, if we reaſon from actual

expe-

experience, it is far more probable that, in any barbarous land, the civil arts will owe their original to foreign operations, either hoſtile or commercial, than to interior efforts.

The Romans were no leſs the legiſlators, than the conquerors of the world. While ſpreading deſolation with their arms, and trampling on the liberties of mankind, they were actually anticipating, in every country, the progreſs of legiſlation, and the arts of government: and the ſame people, in their fall, left to their barbarous conquerors the traces of a jurisprudence, to which Europe was principally indebted for its future progreſs.

Nor are we to regard the Romans as inventors of arts, or as the founders of their own policy. The elements of both were drawn from a foreign ſource. Even the Greeks, in forming their plans, copied

more diſtant originals. Pythagoras and Plato, Lycurgus and Solon, had read the Pillars of Egypt: and the maxims of the Greeks were drawn from the philoſophy, if not from the legiſlation, of the Eaſt.

Similar obſervations are applicable to all the freer ſtates: and if, according to Mr. Hume, pure deſpotiſm, once eſtabliſhed, cannot poſſibly, by its own native force and energy, refine and poliſh itſelf, and republican and free governments are the only proper nurſery of arts and ſciences, we have hence an additional principle to account for their late appearance or ſtagnation in ſo many parts of the earth. Perhaps then, ſince the world began, there are a few only, perhaps but a ſingle people, who owe their riſe and illuſtration to bold and original efforts of the human mind.

If therefore a concurrence of ſuch various cauſes is found requiſite, if not to produce,

produce, at leaſt to accelerate the progreſs of refinement and arts; that progreſs muſt be proportionably retarded by a different contexture of events. But the habitations of barbariſm, at any one period, muſt in ſpeculation appear immenſe, when we farther reflect, that the tranſition from barbariſm to civility is not more incident to mankind than the contrary tranſition [*F*].

How many nations have *certainly* fallen from that importance, which they had formerly borne among the ſocieties of mankind, let the annals of the world declare! How many more have *probably* experienced as fatal a reverſe, we aſſume not the province of determining. But revolutions, to us unknown, various nations may have undergone; while, being expoſed to our view only in their decline, a judgment has been formed of their general character, from what is peculiar to a certain age.

In examining into the antient ſtate of a country, our opinions may be guided by tradition, or by hiſtory, by the genius of language, or of arts, or by the declaration of external monuments. In dubious caſes rational conjecture may reſt on one of theſe modes of evidence, or may be balanced nicely on them all.

Let us imagine a modern traveller to perform the tour of the Eaſt. He finds there a country, under the gloom of barbariſm, preſenting no traces of erudition or civil arts, and without all tradition or memorial of anceſtors ſuperior to the rude inhabitants. Yet hiſtory might inform him, that the natives of this country had once been as conſpicuous and flouriſhing, as their poſterity are now obſcure. Such perhaps is the condition of Babylon, once the wonder of the world. Such is the condition of the antient Colchis, which once, if we believe the writings of Pliny or

of

of Strabo, abounded in riches and in people, and formed the centre of a great commercial ſyſtem.

Let us next imagine our traveller to arrive in a land as barbarouſly peopled, and unmentioned, or undeſcribed, in the writings of any hiſtorian. There however, we will ſuppoſe, are preſerved ſome monuments of art and grandeur, far diſproportioned to the general aſpect of things, and to the actual poſture of affairs. Might he not hence diſtinguiſh a ſtate of depreſſion from a ſtate of nature, and the laſt from the firſt movements of civil ſociety?

Nor is the ſuppoſition purely imaginary. Within the preſent century, diſcoveries have been made in the wilds of Tartary, which ſeem to declare that country to have been the manſion of a great people; or, at leaſt, to indicate a fall from ſome of

the more elevated forms of ſociety. The ſcene of theſe diſcoveries, lying between Siberia and the Caſpian Sea, is now filled with a nation of Calmucs ſubject to the Ruſſian empire: and on ſuch evidence the Czar Peter founded his opinion, that the arts had made the tour of the globe [*G*].

On principles exactly ſimilar, more recent diſcoveries ſerve to confirm the large advances of the antient Etrurians, in elegant and polite attainments, before the ſettlement of any Grecian colony within the limits of Italy.

Nor are ſuch indications confined to any latitude or climate.

The country of Cambodia *, in the torrid zone, uncultivated as the natives now are, preſents appearances to the traveller, which, unſupported by hiſtory or tradition,

* Les Voyages d'un Philoſophe, par M. de Poivre, p. 102.

may be regarded as memorials of former greatneſs.

Even in the new continent, though, in all probability, more recently peopled than the old, there are indications of a ſimilar import.

The account, publiſhed by Mr. Kalm, of an expedition acroſs North America, contains ſome curious information. The expedition was undertaken by a French party from Canada, under the protection of the French government. After traverſing immenſe deſerts, a country of a more promiſing appearance, retaining veſtiges of agriculture and civil life, opened to their view. Amidſt the wildneſs of nature, they perceived an artificial face, and recognized the relics of a former age [*H*].

The teſtimony of other travellers is no leſs deciſive. On the ſhores of the Miſſiſippi,

ſippi, and in other parts of the new continent, there have been found works of great antiquity, which evidence an acquaintance with military ſcience, far above the capacity of rude and untutored tribes *.

Well then may it be inferred, that there are large chaſms in the annals of many countries; and that we have obtained but an imperfect acquaintance with the fortune of governments, and the viciſſitudes of the ſpecies.

There are certain correſponding points in the riſe and decline of nations, which are liable to be confounded. And apparent motion may be as different from the real, in the political as in the natural world.

Unacquainted therefore as we are with the ſtated returns of the civil period, we may miſtake the evening for the morning

* See Carver's Travels through North America.

twilight; and imagine a people to be juſt emerging from the ſhade, who have, long before, paſſed their meridian, and are haſtening back within the limit of darkneſs.

The clear teſtimony of profane hiſtory reaches no higher than the Greeks and Romans. There is no piercing through the gloom of remoter ages. And even the contemporary ſituation of other governments is faintly deſcribed, or miſrepreſented, or paſſed over in contemptuous ſilence.

Such facts as the above, it is not pretended, can ſupply the defect. They may rectify ſome errors; they may ſhed ſome feeble rays of light on nations of dubious exiſtence, but cannot redeem their memory from oblivion. They furniſh however new matter to the antiquarian, and a new topic in the circle of the learned.

They

They do more. They ſerve to vindicate the prerogatives of the ſpecies, and to ſuggeſt conſiderations of ſome weight in the deductions of philoſophy.

Other ſources of information unopened by the Greeks remain ſtill to be explored. The *grand annals of China*, the books of the Bramins, and other immenſe collections of Oriental records, may form a valuable ſupplement to the general hiſtory of the world. Yet, amidſt the darkneſs and uncertainty in which hiſtory and chronology are involved, it appears that the wide differences which have ſubſiſted, or ſubſiſt at preſent, in the actual condition of tribes and nations, are ſuch as, without prejudice to our nature, and excluſive of the unequal influence of the heavens, might, in part, be apprehended from the nice contexture of events, and the complicated operation of moral cauſes.

But

But if the honours of nations were, in reality, to be eſtimated by riches, by population, by the antiquity of arts, or by the ſtability and duration of civil government, it is not any of the European nations, it is the Chineſe, and the Indians, who muſt be placed at the head of the ſpecies.

Let the lovers of paradox* contend that theſe antient people are merely the depoſitaries of ſciences delivered to them, in greater perfection, by a people who flouriſhed in the North of Aſia, but have long ſince diſappeared in the political ſcene.

Let others contend that China was colonized by Egypt, and inherited the ſciences from the parent ſtate, who diffuſed them over the eaſtern as over the weſtern world. Fix their original manſion in the high latitude of Siberia, or in the torrid zone, it is certain that they devolved on the Chi-

* L'Hiſtoire de Aſtronomie ancienne, par M. Bailly.

neſe

neſe and the Indians in an early age; and the uninterrupted poſſeſſion of ſo noble an inheritance is their diſtinguiſhing privilege.

But the conſequences of this privilege are, it muſt be owned, of an ambiguous nature. And, if the criterion of civility has been rightly defined *, many an obſcure people have poſſeſſed it in a degree of perfection which the proudeſt nations in Aſia, or in Europe, could not boaſt in the days of their ſplendor.

If the picture of manners delineated in a performance, which is now read and admired in almoſt all the languages of Europe, is a faithful copy of an original, it is no paradox to affirm, that the court of Fingal was as highly civilized as the court of Lewis XIV.

* Eſſay IV.

In

In the one the arts were totally unknown; in the other they were at the height of their ſplendor. But the want of thoſe graces which the arts confer, was more than compenſated at the one court, by virtues in which the other was deficient. And if fidelity, generoſity, true dignity of mind, are preferable to diſingenuity, perfidy, ſervile adulation; if the former qualities are to be numbered among polite accompliſhments, and the latter to be placed in the oppoſite column, who would not prefer the civilization of Fingal's court to that of the other, though embelliſhed by all arts and ſciences [L]?

Without preſuming then to decide the dubious pretenſions of mankind, it is our deſign, in proſecuting theſe general views, to enquire in what manner the progreſs of ſociety is connected with local circumſtances which do not immediately affect genius, or capacity. And from hence a

more

more accurate judgment will be formed concerning their direct and original influence on the human ſpecies.

Such diſcuſſion will lead us to enquire how far local circumſtances, which, in a variety of ways, may prove beneficial or malignant, are rendered ſubject to our dominion and controul. And, having thus contemplated man as, in ſome ſort, the arbiter of his own fortune, a queſtion will ariſe, no leſs curious than important, whether the perfections and imperfections of his character in one age, may not act, with a direct influence, on the original fabric of poſterity.

This is the field of ſpeculation, which, in the order here ſtated, it is propoſed to touch in the following pages.

NOTES.

NOTES.

NOTE [*A*], p. 155.

LIVY, in the perſon of a Roman Conſul, has deſcribed in ſtrong colours the degeneracy of the antient Gauls ſettled in Aſia, and of the Macedonians diſperſed over various climates of the world.

Galli, ſays he, jam degeneres ſunt; mixti et Gallogræci verè, quod appellantur. Sicut in frugibus pecudibuſque, non tantum ſemina ad ſervandam indolem valent, quantum terræ proprietas cælique, ſub quo aluntur, mutat. Macedones, qui Alexandriam in Ægypto, qui Seleuciam ac Babyloniam, quique alias ſparſas per orbem terrarum colonias habent, in Syros, Parthos, Ægyptios degenerârunt.

Liv. lib. 38. cap. 17.

Theſe are perhaps the exaggerations of Roman eloquence. But if the degeneracy exiſted in

the full extent of the deſcription, it may probably be aſcribed not more to phyſical than to *moral cauſes: and it is not climate, but rather* a communication of manners that aſſimilates the different races of mankind.

If the antient Gauls, who emigrated into Aſia, enervated by the reigning manners of Bithynia, degenerated, according to Livy, from the character of their hardy anceſtors; the modern French, who have occupied the Iſle of Bourbon for a full century, are deſcribed, by a well-informed writer, as equal to the moſt athletic of the European nations.

Orm's Military Tranſactions, vol. i. p. 95.

NOTE [*B*], p. 156.

THIS memorable edict was iſſued by Paul the Third, in the year 1537. But, if the doctrine of ſome late publications had made its appearance in the ſixteenth century, it might have ſuperſeded the neceſſity of this edict, by ſhewing that Ourang-outangs are, in reality, the *aborigines* of all nations.

Such is the *illuſtrious* pedigree of mankind!

NOTE

NOTE [C], p. 162.

ALTHOUGH *there is no mention of Hermodorus in* Livy, it is clear, from the teſtimony of other writers, that this citizen of Epheſus was very inſtrumental in directing the attention of the Romans to the Grecian juriſprudence.

Whatever relates to this celebrated embaſſy is an object of learned curioſity. The ſelection therefore of a few paſſages from antient authors, tending to authenticate the particulars mentioned in the text, may not prove unacceptable to ſome of my readers.

The pretenſions of Hermodorus are acknowledged, in the Pandects of Juſtinian, in the following paſſage:

Alias duas ad eaſdem tabulas adjecerunt: Et ita ex accidentia appellatæ ſunt leges duodecim tabularum: quarum ferendarum auctorem fuiſſe Decemviris *Hermodorum* quemdam Epheſium exulantem in Italia quidam retulerunt.

Digeſt. lib. 1. tit. 2. ſect. 4.

The erection of the ſtatue is mentioned by Pliny:

Fuit et Hermodori Epheſii in comitio legum quas Decemviri ſcribebant, interpretis, publici dicata (viz. ſtatua).

Plin. Nat. Hiſt. lib. 34. cap. 11.

Cicero quotes Heraclitus thus:

Eſt apud Heraclitum phyſicum de principe Epheſiorum Hermodoro; univerſos ait Epheſios eſſe morte multandos, quod, cum civitate expellerent Hermodorum, ita locuti ſunt: Nemo de nobis unus excellat: ſin quis extiterit, alio in loco et apud alios ſit.

Tuſc. Diſput. lib. 5. cap. 36.

The ſame quotation from Heraclitus I find in Strabo, lib. 14. with only this difference, that the Epheſians *under age* are not involved in the condemnation.

The ſame anecdote is likewiſe related by Diogenes Laertius, in the Life of Heraclitus.

Note [*D*], p. 164.

IN ages of ignorance and ſimplicity, mankind are ſo prone to credulity and admiration; that theſe propenſities, prior to reaſoning, ſeem to lead ſavages into the acknowledgment and adoration of inviſible powers, and to introduce,

in

in every country, the rude elements of popular ſuperſtition.

From hence, therefore, a cultivated people derives an importance, which has often been abuſed, though ſo capable of being directed to the beſt intereſts of ſociety.

The natives of the Weſt Indies regarded Columbus and his companions as ſuperior beings, ſprung from heaven, who had deſcended to viſit the earth, and were worthy of divine honours.

——Nova progenies cœlo dimittitur alto.

How honourable then would it have been for the European nations, had they extended their authority in the new hemiſphere by perſuaſion, not by arms, and had a reverence for their religion, their virtue, and ſuperior wiſdom, conducted them to empire.

NOTE [*E*], p. 167.

THERE is but one occurrence in the hiſtory of public negotiations, more ſplendid than this conduct of the Saracens; the conduct of that king of Syracuſe, who made it an expreſs condition in a treaty with the Carthagi-

nians, that they ſhould abſtain from human ſacrifices.

It is noble in a people to demand ſcience from their enemies. It is nobler to demand of enemies not to be to themſelves inhuman.

NOTE [*F*], p. 181.

OUR phyſical and moral ſyſtems, ſays a writer whoſe eloquence is not always ſufficient to ſupport his philoſophy, are carried round, in one perpetual revolution, from generation to corruption, and from corruption to generation; from ignorance to knowledge, and from knowledge to ignorance; from barbarity to civility, and from civility to barbarity. Arts and ſciences grow up, flouriſh, decay, die, and return again, under the ſame or other forms, after periods which appear long to us, however ſhort they may be, compared with the immenſe duration of the ſyſtems of created being. Theſe periods are ſo diſproportionate to all human means of preſerving the memory of things, that, when the ſame things return, we take frequently for a new diſcovery, the revival of an art or ſcience long before known.

Bolingbroke's Phil. Works, vol. ii. p. 224.

The moderns, however, may frequently be conſidered as original in diſcoveries and inventions anticipated by the genius of a former age.

The true ſolar ſyſtem was taught probably by Pythagoras, above two thouſand years ago; yet Copernicus was not indebted for his knowledge of it to the Pythagorean ſchools. Nor would it neceſſarily derogate from the merit of modern diſcoveries, ſhould we admit a propoſition maintained in a late performance, which abounds in curious erudition, Qu'il n'eſt preſque pas une des decouvertes attribuées aux modernes, qui n'ait eté, nonſeulement connue, mais même appuyée par de ſolides raiſonnemens des anciens.

Recherches par M. Dutens.

It is well obſerved by a writer, who illuſtrates the nature of genius with the happy preciſion of a philoſopher, that more of it is often exerted in perfecting an art than in the firſt invention. On this account he ranks the Greeks above the Egyptians in the ſcale of genius; and ſeems to queſtion the frequency of its appearance among the Chineſe, who have not hitherto been able to

advance the arts beyond that mediocrity to which they had attained in ages the moſt remote.

See Dr. Gerard's Eſſay on Genius, p. 19 and 25.

NOTE [G], p. 184.

MR. VOLTAIRE, in his deſcription of the country of the Calmucs, gives the following account of theſe diſcoveries. C'eſt-là qu'on a trouvé en 1720, une maiſon ſouteraine de pierres, des urnes, des lampes, des pendans d'oreilles, une ſtatue equeſtre d'un prince Oriental portant un diadême ſur ſa tête, deux femmes aſſiſes ſur des trônes, un rouleau de manuſcrits, envoyé par Pierre le Grand à l'Academie des Inſcriptions de Paris, et reconnu pour être en langue du Tibet: tous temoignages ſinguliers que les arts ont habité ce pays aujourd'hui barbare, et preuves ſubſiſtantes de ce qu'a dit Pierre le Grand plus d'une fois, que les arts avoient fait le tour du monde.

Hiſt. de l'Empire du Ruſſie, tom. i.

The ſubterraneous houſe mentioned in this paſſage by Mr. Voltaire, is deſcribed more particularly,

ticularly, by our Engliſh traveller Mr. Bell, as a regular edifice, ſituated in the midſt of a deſert, on the banks of the river Irtiſh, and diſtinguiſhed by the name of the *Seven Palaces.*

According to the tradition of ſome Tartars, it was built by Tamerlane the Great: according to that of others, by Gengiſchan. But certain countries of Tartary, of a more northern ſituation, which, according to Mr. Bell's information, the arms of Tamerlane had in vain attempted to ſubdue, appear to have been once the ſcene of great tranſactions; and contain the ſpoils of nations of high antiquity, and no ſtrangers to the arts.

Some Calmuc manuſcripts were purchaſed by Mr. Bell at Tobolſky; and, having been preſented by him to Sir Hans Sloan, are now depoſited in the Britiſh Muſeum.

See Bell's Travels, vol. i. p. 209.

There is another ſpecies of evidence, which, in the opinion of ſome writers, is ſtill more concluſive.

The

The exiſtence of a great nation in the north of Aſia, long before the dates of our moſt antient memorials, has been lately contended for, on aſtronomical principles, by M. Bailli, a writer of great learning and ingenuity. He contends, that the original ſeat of mankind was ſituated in the high latitude of 49° or 50°; that the primitive migrations were from North to South; and that we find in the Eaſt the fragments only of ſciences which were carried thither by the primitive emigrants, but which were never generally known to the Indians or other Orientals.

I cannot attempt in a note to examine the foundations of this theory. It is ſufficient to obſerve, that it has not as yet been able to ſhake the eſtabliſhed conviction of the learned.

Mr. Bailli, in a ſeries of letters addreſſed to the late M. Voltaire, labours to convert that author to his opinions; and from a ſympathy, no doubt, which reigns among congenial ſpirits, he eſpouſes an hypotheſis of Monſ. Buffon, concerning the earth and the whole planetary ſyſtem, ſtill more fanciful than his own concerning

cerning the origin of nations, and the progreſs of arts and ſciences.

NOTE [*H*], p. 185.

THESE intelligent travellers, having ſojourned in the country for ſome time, had an opportunity of examining it with attention.

The country is ſituated at the diſtance of nine hundred French miles weſt of Montreal. And, beſides other monuments of antient cultivation, there were found in it pillars of ſtone, of great magnificence, manifeſtly erected by human hands, but of which there remained no tradition among the Indian tribes. Unfortunately, theſe pillars contained no inſcriptions, whence any conjecture could be formed concerning their original. At length, however, a large ſtone, in the form of a pillar, was diſcovered, and fixed in it a ſmaller ſtone covered with unknown characters. This ſtone, ſevered from the larger maſs, being carried to Canada, and from thence to France, was delivered into the cuſtody of M. Maurepas, at that time ſecretary of ſtate.

NOTE

NOTE [*I*], p. 191.

A WELL known writer in politics affects to have ideas of the ſtate of mankind ſo *mathematically* preciſe, that he divides the Indians of America into three claſſes, *mere ſavages*, *half-ſavages*, and *almoſt civilized*.

The ſavages he deſcribes, in all reſpects, as a blood-thirſty, unfeeling race, deſtitute of every human virtue. But miracles have not yet ceaſed. The miſſionaries of Paraguay, we are told, can transform theſe infernal ſavages into the moſt benevolent race under heaven. A metamorphoſis which, though celebrated by a dignitary of the church, will hardly command belief in this ſceptical age: yet it ſerves to ſupport a new theory of government, which is founded on the total debaſement of human nature, and is now oppoſed to a theory that aſſerts its honours, and derives from a happier origin the image of a free people.

See a work by Dean Tucker, Part II. containing, as the writer *modeſtly* declares, the true baſis of civil government, in oppoſition to the ſyſtem of Mr. Locke and his followers.

When

When the benevolence of this writer is exalted into charity, when the ſpirit of his religion corrects the rancour of his philoſophy, he will learn a little more reverence for the ſyſtem to which he belongs, and acknowledge, in the moſt untutored tribes, ſome glimmerings of humanity, and ſome deciſive indications of a moral nature.

ESSAY VI.

OF THE GENERAL INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE UPON NATIONAL OBJECTS.

THE influence of climate on the policy if nôt on the character of nations is acknowledged by every obſerver of human affairs.

To eſtimate this influence, in the various regions of the globe, were an arduous problem. But, by attending to the diſtinct modes of its operation, we may be able perhaps, to ſet bounds to its empire.

Climate then may be regarded either as a natural principle, acting with powerful energy, or with irreſiſtible impulſe, on the fabri

fabric of our being; or it may be regarded merely as a local circumſtance leading to a variety of action in the œconomy of civil life. Viewed in this ſecondary light alone, it will appear eminently to affect the progreſs of arts and government.

The means of ſubſiſtence, the ſubject of art, the incitements to induſtry, the ſcene of its operations, ſo diverſified in the ſeveral diſtricts of the earth, muſt affect proportionably the courſe of affairs. And in circumſtances ſo diſſimilar, it would be ſtrange, if the conduct of the actors were governed preciſely by the ſame laws, or every where attended with the ſame ſucceſs.

The genius of mankind, far from being equal, muſt have been as various as the ſituations in which they are placed, did we obſerve all nations exalted to an equal pitch

pitch of civility, or of eminence in arts and ſciences.

To a peculiarity of ſituation, and often to the urgency of occaſions, nations as well as individuals owe their greatneſs. Preſſed with no difficulties, and not conſcious of wants, mankind in general love repoſe. The calls muſt be loud and frequent, which animate their exertions, and urge them forward in active or laborious purſuits.

In countries therefore of original affluence, ſupplying ſpontaneouſly, or with little culture, the neceſſaries of life; arts will remain long neglected, or will be cultivated ſlowly, and with inferior ardour. But in countries, more penurious by nature, the deficiency is ſupplied by the reſources of induſtry and invention.

In the former ſituation the genius of mankind lies dormant, or is feebly exer-

ciſed, or evaporates upon ſubjects which make but little figure in the hiſtory of civil ſociety. Of conſequence, many characteriſtics of primitive ſimplicity will be long preſerved: and a people may increaſe and flouriſh, to a high degree, before they have recourſe to the partition of land, the diviſion of labour, and the diſtinctions of private property; circumſtances which firſt open domeſtic commerce, diverſify and embelliſh the ranks of life, and furniſh out the objects of a regular œconomy.

Unacquainted with theſe objects, men ſoothed by indolence, or immerſed in the gratifications of ſenſe, are ſurely in no condition to eſtabliſh a plan of government upon rational or juſt foundations. Yet the habits formed among them, in the infancy of ſociety, gradually break the mind for political ſervitude. The deſire of equality is balanced by a regard to exterior accommodations; and the love of ſafety, of

of pleaſure, or of eaſe, triumphs, in every competition, over the paſſions which are the natural guardians of law and liberty.

Such, in ſome climates of the world, is the real deſcription of mankind. Habits chiefly incident to poliſhed ages, vitiate and enfeeble the ſavage life. And, the uſual *effects* of refined and commercial arts in the decline of civilized government, are *cauſes*, in theſe climates, which, operating from the beginning, ſuperſede their origin, or obſtruct their growth.

To be unaſſiſted then by arts, yet obnoxious to the evils with which they are commonly aſſociated, is, conſidered in a moral or in a political light, one of the hardeſt diſpenſations of fortune.

In other countries, the imbecility of government derives often a temporary ſupport from the very arts which tend to

its deſtruction. Thus the commercial opulence of Carthage prolonged her exiſtence for half a century, by ſatiating the avarice of Rome. Thus Rome herſelf, when no longer able to defend her empire by arms, was able by ſubſidies to poſtpone her fate.

Rome indeed, in her better days, could reſiſt the moſt deſperate onſets of barbarians: for to equal enthuſiaſm in arms, ſhe added ſuperior ſkill in the art of war. When the Cimbri and Teutones, in the career of glory and of victory, were preparing to croſs the Alps, Marius by one deciſive blow, cruſhed that formidable invaſion. Yet the deſtroyers of the Roman name were one day to come from the ſame quarter. The nations of Scythia, ſituate between the Euxine and Caſpian ſeas, having been exterminated by Pompey, directed their courſe, under the conduct of Odin, towards the north and weſt of Europe. They eſtabliſhed themſelves in the almoſt evacuated

evacuated ſettlements of the Cimbri and Teutones, where incorporating with the feeble remnant of the ſpecies, they repaired the ſtrength and population of the North. And it was their deſcendants, now confounded with the northern nations, who, returning ſome ages after, retaliated on the Romans the calamities inflicted on their forefathers, and on mankind.

A people, however, ſo long progreſſive as the Romans, could fall only by degrees. The reſources of the Roman government were not exhauſted with Roman virtue.

The Goths, who, by the memorable defeat of the Emperor Decius, had become maſters of the Illyrian provinces, were induced by the pecuniary conceſſions of the ſucceeding emperors, to abandon their conqueſts. Conceſſions ſo puſillanimous, I am not ignorant, have been ſuppoſed to haſten the fall of Rome: but they

ſeem, at this conjuncture, to have been as neceſſary as they were inglorious, and the feeble expedients of a declining empire in the criſis of its fate.

A variety of ſuch expedients, in calamitous periods, policy and arts afford. But the communities of mankind, in the climates above deſcribed, by a cruel fatality, are deſtitute of the ordinary reſources of government, whether in a rude or cultivated age.

'Their peculiar circumſtances then, with regard to foreign powers deſerve attention. The ſame original and luxuriant profuſion which ſo long exempts them from labour, and diſpenſes with arts, and poſtpones the aſſignation of property, expoſes them the more to the envy and hoſtile deſigns of other ſtates. In proportion to the fertility of their ſettlement, the poſſeſſion of it is the more precarious. To de-

fend

ſend that ſettlement, is almoſt the ſole end of public union: nor will the apprehenſion of danger from abroad allow their attention to fix upon the objects of interior government. Implicit ſubmiſſion to the command of a ſuperior, an idea ſo requiſite in the conduct of armies, and in the ſcience of war, inſinuates itſelf into the frame of their political conſtitution. In ſupporting political exiſtence, they part with all the ideas of natural liberty: and the rigour of deſpotiſm alone, controuling the tendency of their manners, can ſecure that command of the national force which, in times of public danger, is neceſſary for the protection of their country. To avoid therefore the condition of a conquered people, they acquieſce in a conſtitutional tyranny, perhaps not leſs oppreſſive.

Thus danger from abroad concurs with their domeſtic circumſtances in the ſubverſion of their natural rights; and neither the ope-

rations of peace nor of war ſupply the occaſions which animate a riſing people.

The ſpirit of liberty, in its full ſtrength, is not always ſuperior to the ſenſe of public danger.

When thirty cities of Latium, confederated with the Sabines, threatened to cruſh in its infancy the Roman commonwealth, conſternation and terror ſeized all ranks of men. And the dictatorſhip, a ſort of temporary deſpotiſm, and a ſolœciſm in a free government, owed its original eſtabliſhment to this alarming conjuncture. The confederacy, however, was quickly diſſolved: the battle at the lake Regillus was of a deciſive nature; and the men who had expelled the Tarquins were able to rule the ſtorm. But had ſuch perils, which were tranſient and accidental, been inherent in the ſoil; had the Romans been more liable to ſuffer, than prone to commence hoſtilities;

ties; had the poſſeſſion of a more productive or extenſive ſettlement drawn upon them at firſt the envy of mankind, inſtead of animating their own ambition, the neceſſity of public affairs muſt have ſoon rendered that magiſtracy perpetual, which was at firſt of ſo limited a duration, reſorted to only in great emergencies, and during the flouriſhing ages of the commonwealth altogether diſcontinued.

Let us imagine, then, the ſpirit of liberty already languiſhing, menaced with danger like that which made the Romans tremble, but ariſing from fixed and permanent cauſes, and we imagine the circumſtances of mankind, in climates which eſtabliſh and perpetuate a deſpotiſm more abſolute, more formidable, and more degrading, than the dictatorſhip of Rome [*A*].

* *

A nation determined by external ſituation to embark in ſchemes of dominion,

poſſeſſes

poſſeſſes immenſe advantages in war over any other nation who arms merely for defence. The principles of intereſt, of ambition, of glory, embolden the deſigns of the former, and give to their efforts irreſiſtible impetuoſity. The efforts of the latter are more conſtrained and reluctant; and the moſt proſperous ſucceſs ultimately terminating in a temporary ſecurity rather than in poſitive acquiſitions, produces not the martial ardour and enthuſiaſm which actuate heroic minds.

Hence the formidable incurſions of the antient Scythians, and the unequal oppoſition of the Aſiatic ſtates. Hence the difficulties encountered by the Romans in extending their conqueſts in Europe, and their more eaſy triumphs on the theatre of Aſia. Hence we may obſerve, on the one hand, the aſtoniſhing career of the northern conquerors, who overturned all the governments of Europe, and on the other, the feeble

feeble reſiſtance made to their progreſs by more opulent and luxurious nations.

The Spartans are almoſt the only inſtance of a warlike people who, by ſyſtem, abſtained from conqueſt. Yet was it conſonant with the maxims of Spartan policy to transfer every war to a diſtance from the ſeat of government. And during a period of ſix hundred years, which elapſed from the firſt eſtabliſhment of the Dorians in Lacedæmon to the reign of Ageſilaus, no foreign enemy had dared to ſet foot in Laconia. To render that country the theatre of war, was reſerved for Epaminondas.

"Many of you," ſaid an Argive to a Spartan, "ſleep on the plains of Argos."—"Not one of you," replied the Spartan, "ſleeps on the plains of Lacedæmon."

Sparta,

Sparta, though great in war, was singularly formed for peace, for virtue, and for harmony. The rigour of domeſtic diſcipline rendered war a relaxation from toil. And the duration of its civil government was owing, in a great degree, to the confinement of territory, to the love of juſtice, to the excluſion of luxury, of money, of commerce, and of arts and ſciences.

There is a nation too, deſcribed by Tacitus, who ſeem to have been diſtinguiſhed among the antient Germans, as the Spartans were diſtinguiſhed among the antient Greeks; and though their territory was more extenſive, to have reſembled the Spartans in the maxims of their policy, and in ſome features of their national character [*B*]. But though ſuch examples of wiſdom and moderation ſometimes occur, and adorn hiſtorical annals, the rules of diſtributive juſtice are commonly little regarded

garded by nations in the career of military glory.

The nature of climates, the comparative fertility of countries, by determining the courſe of offenſive war, and by affecting the meaſure of ſubordination in civil ſociety, muſt be allowed no inconſiderable ſway over the general fortune of the world: and circumſtances apparently the moſt favourable prove often, in their conſequences, the moſt adverſe to the great proceedings of nations.

Nature, in ſome climates, like an over-indulgent parent, enervates the genius of her children, by gratifying at once their moſt extravagant demands. In other climates ſhe diſpenſes her bounty with a more frugal hand, and, by impoſing harder conditions, impels them to induſtry, trains them up to enterprize, and inſtructs them

in the advantages of arts and regular government.

But the extremes of munificence and rigour, by withholding the motives to induſtry, or by rendering the ends deſperate, often produce ſimilar effects. A middle ſituation between thoſe extremes is perhaps the moſt eligible in a moral light, as well as the moſt auſpicious for civil progreſs.

Mankind, however, in the various climates where they have fixed their habitations, will long preſerve a genius and character wonderfully correſponding with the various diſcipline of nature. One people, enured to difficulties, become addicted to hardy enterprize. Another people, bleſſed with eaſe, exert their talents in refined ſpeculation, rather than in active purſuits.

The ſpeculative ſciences accordingly can be traced back to infancy in Chaldæa, in

India, in Egypt, and countries that verge to the torrid zone; while we obſerve them attain to full growth and perfection only in the higher latitudes.

In theſe latitudes their connexion with arts is recognized, their importance to ſociety more ſteadily kept in view, and a rank and eſtimation aſſigned them, regulated in part by that ſtandard. But in thoſe lower latitudes, cultivated from other conſiderations, they retain long their primeval form, and with little reference to mechanical or vulgar arts, command, on their own account alone, the veneration of the people. Yet rendered ſubſervient perhaps to the ends of ſuperſtition, or an engine of deſpotic power, they may have contributed more to ſink and debaſe, than to improve and dignify the ſpecies.

Sentiments and opinions, which are coëval with the beginnings of refinement,

ment, and which, when duly regulated, are ſo beneficial and ornamental to ſociety, may thus, by falſe aſſociations, aſſume a form, and inſtil paſſions which diſgrace reaſon and humanity. Accordingly in the countries firſt enlightened by ſcience, the religious paſſions have been fermented with the greateſt violence, and produced the moſt aſtoniſhing effects.

Under their impreſſion, a wild race from Arabia proved an overmatch for valiant and hardy nations. For, by this ſpirit, the Saracens aroſe; and turning the tide of conqueſt, which had run ſo generally from north to ſouth, into an almoſt oppoſite direction, threatened, by the progreſs of their arms, to reverſe the hiſtory of the world [*C*].

In the ſame climates have reigned, at different periods, the moſt abject ſuperſtition, the wildeſt fanaticiſm, the moſt ſub-

lime

lime theology: and, excluſive of the pure and divine inſtitutions of the true religion, many of the rites and obſervances propagated over various and diſtant regions have originally centered there.

But to account for ſo ſtriking an effect in this latitude or climate, there is no need to recur to the poſitive and direct influence of the outward elements on the human mind. The ſeries of events, once begun, is governed more perhaps by moral than by phyſical cauſes: and this propenſity of genius and temper may owe its original to the primary direction of the ſciences, and their early alliance with theology and civil government.

The ſciences corrupted in their ſource, or perverted in their application, were early inſtrumental, among the nations of the Eaſt, in conſecrating abſurdity, and giving conſiſtency to error. Dreſſed up in the ſolemn airs of myſtery, they abetted

religious

religious impoſture; and ſerved, in the hands of prieſts and civil rulers, as a charm to allure and faſcinate the crowd. Augury, divination, and ſuch wretched literature as tended rather to corrupt than to improve the underſtanding, were, above all other learning, admired and cultivated. The motions of the heavens were ſtudied, in order to diſcover their imaginary influences of ſtars: and a ſcience which opens the nobleſt view of the univerſe, and is ſo capable of being directed to valuable ends in civil life, was connected in its origin with the credulity and ſuperſtition of mankind.

In Chaldæa, the moſt antient ſeat of aſtronomical obſervation and diſcovery, judicial aſtrology was held in ſupreme and univerſal eſteem. Pythagoras, the moſt accompliſhed maſter that ever flouriſhed in Greece or Italy, borrowed his ideas from the Magi of Chaldæa, from the Gymnoſophiſts of India, or from Egyptian prieſts, was admitted into their colleges, initiated

into the myſteries of their religion, and by *them* inſtructed in the true ſyſtem of the world.

But the myſterious ſciences of Pythagoras were ſoon forgotten in the Italic ſchool. The Romans occupied, from the inſtitution of their commonwealth, in ſcenes of action, had no taſte or leiſure for ſuch purſuits. With invincible prejudices againſt the Chaldæans, and other Orientals, and with no turn towards aſtrology, they regarded their character and erudition with equal and undiſtinguiſhing contempt. From the reign of Numa there had elapſed a period of above five hundred years, when Julius Cæſar, aided by the ſuperior learning of the Eaſt, adjuſted the civil year, with ſome accuracy, to the true annual period, and eſtabliſhed, on aſtronomical principles, the reformation of the Roman calendar.

Yet the Romans as far excelled thoſe other nations of antiquity, in the fabric of their

their jurisprudence, and in the application of the true principles of government, as they were excelled by them in aſtronomy, in geometry, in phyſics, in theological refinements, and in all the abſtractions of philoſophy.

In general, fertile and luxuriant countries ſeem peculiarly fitted to be the nurſery of refinement: becauſe leiſure awakens curioſity; and curioſity leads to purſuits that fill up the vacancies in human life. Every new ſituation preſents to man new objects of ſolicitude and care. The demands of animal nature no longer bound his deſires. The ſcene now opens to the intellectual eye. He marks the relations, and dependencies of things; and learns to contemplate the world and himſelf.

Conſtituted in ſuch circumſtances, what more natural to a mind, ſomewhat elevated above common life, than this ſoliloquy:

"Where

"Where am I! Whence my original! What my deſtiny!—Is all around me diſcord, confuſion, chaos! or is there not ſome principle of union, conſiſtency, and order?—Am I accountable to any ſuperior? connected with any great ſyſtem of being? ——Is this contracted ſpan of life the whole of man? or was he born with higher expectations, and for nobler ends? Is there a power above to juſtify that hope!"—

Various opinions will afterwards ariſe, in the courſe of philoſophical generations, concerning the œconomy of inviſible powers. Various rites will be inſtituted to render the Divinity propitious, and, ſince fear predominates in moſt religions, more to avert his wrath. But thoſe queſtions are the ſuggeſtions of nature, and, in the more productive regions of Aſia and Africa, gave a beginning to the philoſophic age. Yet, in ſuch regions,

from the want of the chief incentives to action, the improvements of civil life will ſeldom arrive at a high pitch of eminence or perfection.

Countries of a different deſcription will be ſlower in their firſt improvement; becauſe an attention to the neceſſary functions of life allows not ſufficient leiſure for obſervation, or the ſublimer culture of the underſtanding. But ſciences and arts tranſplanted hither in a maturer form, take root and flouriſh; and alleviating the toils or enlarging the accommodations of ſociety, grow up to an extraordinary height, gradually removing the obſtacles which prevented their more early eſtabliſhment.

Here too the mechanical arts, which owe their maturity, if not their birth, to the more preſſing occaſions, or increaſing demands of mankind, become ſubſidiary to the

the ſublimer ſciences, and advance them beyond the limit aſſigned them in their antient ſeats. To this fortunate alliance, the labours of the learned in modern Europe have been indebted for one half of their ſucceſs: and, this alliance broken, the ſciences, in our climates, would ſink down to the level at which they have ſtood ſo long in the climates of Aſia.

The genius of nations is more or leſs turned to peace or war, to ſpeculation or action. The more ſpeculative begin improvements; and the active conquer; yet improve often upon the improvements of the vanquiſhed.

Thus the ſituation of the ſpecies in one country is more advantageous to the firſt openings of refinement, from circumſtances which allow a freedom to genius, and an exemption from animal toil: while their

circumſtances, in another country, conduce more effectually to the farther extenſion and cultivation of the liberal arts. And theſe effects, frequently reſulting from ſoil and climate, whoſe temper depends ſo often upon the poſition of the globe, mark a fundamental and fixed diſtinction between the communities of mankind in the lower and higher latitudes.

The temperament indeed of countries is diverſified by a variety of cauſes, natural and artificial, which we ſhall not attempt to enumerate. Elevation above the level of the ſea has ſometimes a deciſive influence, and confers many of the advantages of the temperate zone on countries that approach almoſt to the equator. But notwithſtanding a number of exceptions, the more general character of climates correſponds with the aſtronomical diviſions of the earth. And ſuitably to this courſe of

nature,

nature, the ſame civil order of things, which we have remarked in the antient continent, ſeemed to have been preparing in the new.

The ſun of ſcience aroſe there, as on our ſide the globe, on the confines, or within the limit of the torrid zone. Civilization had begun, and even made ſome progreſs, in the empires of Peru and Mexico, while mankind in all the upper latitudes were utter ſtrangers to refinement, in the loweſt ſtage of political union, and, like the antient Germans, ſcarce acquainted with ſubordination in civil or domeſtic government.

Their æra of civility has not yet arrived. The ſyſtem to which they belonged was unhinged by violence. But had the Peruvian and Mexican arts been tranſplanted into thoſe regions of the new hemiſphere, they would, in all probability, have flouriſhed there, from the ſame combination of

cauſes

causes as in Europe, with a degree of vigour and ſucceſs unknown in the more productive and fertile climates which gave them birth.

The new world, from its connexion with the old, opens to the arts and ſciences an oppoſite career. And in contradiction to the firſt arrangements, and the apparent order of phyſical laws, they will be carried by a more impetuous current, along the ſtream of political events, from the northern to the ſouthern climates.

It becomes not, perhaps, a Briton, a private citizen, at ſuch a criſis, to anticipate this order of things; to predict the revolutions of government, or the eventual glory of a future age.

This chapter of accidents ſhould be read in the cabinets of Europe.

It is local circumſtances alone whoſe tendency we are contemplating in both hemiſpheres: and to open the extent of that influence in the general ſyſtem, it is neceſſary, as in the following Eſſay, to deſcend into ſome farther detail.

NOTES.

NOTES.

NOTE [*A*], p. 217.

I HAVE mentioned the office of Roman Dictator, as being the moſt extraordinary conceſſion, which the exigency of public affairs ever extorted from a free people.

Had ſuch an accumulated juriſdiction been transferred to one man, by a ſolemn act of the whole legiſlature, it might be vindicated, perhaps, on the principles of ſtate neceſſity. But when the right of nomination was veſted in a ſingle conſul, without the conſent, againſt the will of the people; and without even a decree of the ſenate, though that ſanction was indeed neceſſary to confirm the conſul's nomination; we obſerve, with aſtoniſhment, among a people jealous of their rights, an engine of government one of the moſt tremendous, in appearance, that ever hung over the liberties of mankind.

It deſerves however to be remembered, that the authority of Dictator, while it annihilated in a moment every other authority in the ſtate, left the tribunitial power untouched, whoſe influence formed a ſort of conſtitutional controul on the proceedings of that formidable magiſtrate. Yet more admirable far is the policy of the Britiſh government, in ſuch extremities as called for a Dictator under the Roman.

In England, to borrow the language of a late noble author, well read in the conſtitution of his country, "In England, where a mixed conſtitution of government unites the powers of monarchy, ariſtocracy, and democracy, much more happily than that of Rome ever did, even in its beſt ſtate, if extraordinary dangers require that the Habeas Corpus law, (the great ſecurity of our freedom) ſhould for a time be ſuſpended, it can only be done by the joint advice and authority of the whole legiſlature. And if, in any caſe where delay would be fatal, the ſafety of the public apparently obliges the king, in whom alone the executive power reſides, to act againſt this or any other law, without having been previouſly impowered ſo to do by both houſes

of

" of parliament, his miniſters are reſponſible " for it to their country, and can no otherwiſe " be ſecured than by a bill of indemnity, which, " if the neceſſity pleaded for their juſtification " is found to have been real, the Lords and " Commons will not refuſe to paſs. But, in " Rome, a ſingle conſul, agreeing with the ſe- " nate to name a dictator, without the concur- " rence, and againſt the will of the people, " might ſubject, at any time, the liberty and the " life of every Roman citizen to the arbitrary " power of one man, ſet above all the laws, and " in no way reſponſible, for the exerciſe of his " ſovereignty, to the juſtice of the ſtate. In- " deed after the end of the ſecond Punic war, " the ſenate itſelf grew ſo jealous of the danger " of this office, that, for an hundred and " twenty years before Sylla took it up, no Dic- " tator was appointed."

Lord Lyttelton's Works, p. 36.

In one inſtance, perhaps the only one to be met with in the Roman annals, the ſenate referred the choice of a Dictator to the people; and the Conſul Marcellus named Quintus Fulvius in obedience to their order.

Liv. l. 27, c. 5.

NOTE

NOTE [*B*], p. 220.

THE Spartans are not degraded by a compariſon with this virtuous people, whoſe character is thus delineated by the Roman hiſtorian:

Tam immenſum terrarum ſpatium non tenent tantum *Chauci*, ſed et implent: populus inter Germanos nobiliſſimus, quique magnitudinem ſuam malit juſtitia tueri. Sine cupiditate, ſine impotentia, quieti ſecretique, nulla provocant bella, nullis raptibus aut latrociniis populantur. Idque præcipuum virtutis ac virium argumentum eſt, quod ut ſuperiores agant, non per injurias aſſequuntur. Prompta tamen omnibus arma, ac ſi res poſcat, exercitus: plurimum virorum equorumque: et quieſcentibus eadem fama.

Tacit. de Morib. Germ. c. 35.

NOTE [*C*], p. 224.

HAD the Saracens, actuated by the ſame fanatical ſpirit, begun their career ſome centuries ſooner, they might have met, with equal force, the barbarians of the North, and

contended

contended with them for the ſpoils of the weſtern empire. Or perhaps the encounter of ſuch armies might have prolonged its date.

When the Saracens, in the eighth century, after the conqueſt of Africa, appeared in Spain, the Goths ſettled there, degenerated from the valour of their anceſtors, were in no condition to make head againſt ſuch invaders. The conteſt would have been very differently maintained by thoſe Goths, who, in the fifth century, paſſed the Pyrenees, and bid defiance to the maſters of the world. But now the empire of the Caliphs was ſoon eſtabliſhed in Spain. And the Saracens, after the reduction of that country, meditated the conqueſt of all Europe. They became maſters of that part of Languedoc which had been ſubject to the Goths; and were marching on, in confidence and triumph, to complete their deſigns, when fortunately for the Chriſtian world, in the year 731, they were defeated in a pitched battle by Charles Martel, the champion of the faith, and the moſt renowned general of the age.

To eſtabliſh the Mahometan religion all over the earth by the ſword, was conformable with its avowed maxims. Predeſtination too was an article

article of faith that ſerved to heighten the conſtitutional valour of the Saracens, which was ſtill farther enflamed by an opinion inculcated by their leaders, that to die in battle ſecured infallibly to every Muſſulman an immediate entrance into paradiſe, and an introduction to the beatific viſion.

Their valour however had been ſignalized before the age of Mahomet; and it is not pretended that religious enthuſiaſm acted alone, without the co-operation of other cauſes, in the eſtabliſhment of the Moſlem yoke.

"Pour expliquer, ſays Monteſquieu, cet evenement fameux de la conquête de tant de pays par les Arabes, il ne faut pas avoir recours au ſeul enthouſiaſme. Les Sarraſins etoient, depuis long temps, diſtingués parmi les auxiliaires des Romains, et des Perſes; les Oſroeniens, et eux etoient les meilleurs hommes de trait qu'il y eut au monde: Severe, Alexandre, et Maximin en avoient engagé à leur ſervice autant qu'ils avoient pu, et s'en etoient ſervis, avec un grand ſuccès, contre les Germains, qu'ils deſoloient de loin: ſous Valens, les Goths ne pouvoient leur reſiſter; enfin, ils etoient, dans ces temps-la, la meilleure cavalerie du monde."

Grandeur et Decadence des Romains, ch. 22.

ESSAY VII.

OF THE FARTHER TENDENCY OF LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES TO AFFECT THE PROCEEDINGS OF NATIONS.

BESIDES the comparative fertility of ſoils, the nature of their productions, and the poſition of the globe, there is a variety of local circumſtances, which, by affecting the ſeries of public events, are intimately connected with the civil order of the world.

The diviſion of a country by mountains, by lakes, or rivers, the vicinity or diſtance of the ſea, inſular or continental ſituation, and the relative condition of the ſurrounding nations, are cauſes which affect, in an

eminent degree, the nature and ſucceſs of public enterprize.

A fixed ſettlement is, in the order of things, an indiſpenſable preliminary to the improvements of civil life. Men unattached to any ſoil, but accuſtomed to perpetual migration, are in no condition to cultivate arts, and ſeem incapable of conducting, for a length of time, any well-ordered ſyſtem of operations. Such looſe and disjointed members compoſe no regular body. Individuals incorporated into no ſteady form, nor kept together by any local ties, can maintain only a temporary and precarious union, and deſerve not the name of a nation. The progreſs then of mankind in every climate is conſiderably affected by the form and extent of their original ſettlement. And the occupants of an immenſe tract of country, where nature has ſet no bounds to diſperſion, nor erected barriers againſt the incurſions of other tribes,

ſeem

ſeem to be moſt inauſpiciouſly conſtituted for the maintenance of civil liberty, or the growth of civil arts.

Unhappily, the genius of man, in the ruder ages, is peculiarly turned for war. The internal diſſenſions among the ſame people, or the hoſtile deſigns of different tribes, gave occaſion, we may believe, to the firſt arrangements of political ſociety.

The ideas of property ripen by ſlow degrees; and the maxims of juriſprudence are regulated by the fortune of arms.

In a country, therefore, affording no retreat to the vanquiſhed, it is ſcarce poſſible, in the ruder ages, long to preſerve the freedom of mankind. And while ſervitude is the only alternative compatible with ſubſiſtence, in this extremity, the moſt reluctant ſpirits will finally bend under the yoke of dominion.

Such cauſes operating at firſt within a narrow ſphere, will afterwards prevail with a more diffuſive influence. In proportion to the number of the vanquiſhed tribes, the ſubjection of other tribes will be accompliſhed with greater eaſe: till at length various and diſtant nations, whoſe poſſeſſions were ſeparated only by imaginary lines, falling ſucceſſively under one dominion, the manſion of a little commonwealth becomes the capital of a vaſt empire.

Thus reluctant nations coaleſce into a ſyſtem. The ſame cauſes which proved deſtructive of their rights, in the firſt ſtruggles of political life, will render future attempts for the recovery of them extremely hazardous; and the enlargement of territory beyond the antient limit, will more effectually prevent that union and concert, in the operations of ſubjects,

which

which lead to the introduction of the more liberal plans of government.

The voice of liberty will be heard no more. She can no longer arm her aſſociates in the cauſe of humanity. The monarch of a great empire ſits ſecure upon the throne, and ſets at defiance the murmuring of the people and the revolt of provinces.

In this poſture of things, the reign of deſpotiſm may long endure. The rivalſhip and jealouſy, which animate independent ſtates, ceaſe to animate this larger ſyſtem: nor can the ſciences and arts which raiſe and adorn ſociety, be preſumed to flouriſh under the malignant influence of a conſtitution tending ſo manifeſtly to the debaſement of the human ſpecies.

Such conſequences then may be traced up to a geographical ſource. Nor will the

evils hence reſulting, exhauſt their force in the open tracts of country where they began to flow. The torrent which covered the plains rolls on, with increaſing violence, and the beſt fenced territories are no longer able to reſiſt its progreſs. Nations, accordingly, ſituated with many advantages for interior policy, and whoſe frontiers ſeem little expoſed to external annoyance, may have theſe advantages more than balanced by a dangerous vicinity to a growing empire.

We obſerve the nations of Tartary not only deſtitute of arts, but, notwithſtanding barrenneſs of ſoil, and the poſſeſſion of a climate accounted favourable to the independency of man, condemned to all the rigour and tyranny of deſpotic power [*A*]. A country, the nurſe of heroes, that has ſo often ſent forth tribes to be the conquerors of Aſia, ſees herſelf involved in the general ſervitude;

ſervitude; and an acceſſion to empires ſubdued by her own arms.

The Arabians perhaps are the only people under heaven who have remained, in all ages, exempt from a foreign yoke. Confident againſt the world on Arabian ground, they reſiſted the ſucceſſive attempts of the Aſſyrian, Perſian, Grecian, and Roman arms. Yet the vicinity of theſe empires was not regarded with indifference. It filled them with continual alarms, it circumſcribed their projects, confined their genius to defenſive war, and retarded the cultivation of the liberal arts. But when, in the decline of the Roman power, other nations preſumed to be ambitious, the Arabians were capable of forming extenſive plans of military and civil enterprize. Yet, in their own deſerts alone, they are invincible, and there the race of Iſhmael maintain to this day an independence on the Ottoman empire. There the human

mind

mind is ſtill capable of bold and liberal efforts. A new ſect of religion has, of late, appeared in thoſe regions, of a genius uncommonly elevated*. It explodes every ſpecies of idolatry. It enjoins the belief and worſhip of one eternal Being, the ſovereign of the world, and eſtabliſhes the doctrines of pure theiſm on the ſole foundation of reaſon and nature. It conſiders Moſes and a number of his ſucceſſors in the Eaſt, as ſublime teachers of wiſdom, and, as ſuch, worthy of reſpect and reverence. But it rejects all revelations, and denies that any book was ever penned by the angel Gabriel. How far this religion may diffuſe itſelf is yet uncertain. But, though it may breathe a while in the free air of Arabia, it never can be cheriſhed or tolerated in the Ottoman empire, where ſuperſtition is ſo neceſſary to conduct the machine of government.

* Deſcription de l'Arabie, par M. Niebuhr.

Thus

Thus the fortune of the Arabians corresponds with the deſcription of their country, which ſecures them from foreign conqueſt, and determines the meaſure of their obedience to civil power. And whether the hiſtory of this extraordinary people is accounted for by natural cauſes, or by a ſpecial interpoſition of Providence, the prediction concerning them is equally fulfilled: nor can it derogate from the authority of holy writ, that we obſerve the determinations of heaven to coincide with a regular and eſtabliſhed order of ſecond cauſes.

But the connexion of a ſettlement with the more general fortune of mankind is chiefly diſcernible in the production of extended government.

As the political diviſions of territory, though fluctuating and precarious, have, however, at all times, ſome neceſſary dependence on the natural and permanent

diviſions

diviſions of the terraqueous globe, the conſequences ariſing from the magnitude of ſtates and empires may often be referred ultimately to a geographical ſource. Local circumſtances alone have ſet bounds to the devaſtation of conqueſt, and to the rage of war; have checked the tyranny of governments, and prevented the eſtabliſhment of an univerſal empire: an eſtabliſhment of ſuch alarming tendency, that we can ſcarce reſiſt ſuppoſing it to have been one deſign of Providence, in the natural diviſions of the earth, to ſuperſede the poſſibility of an event that would have proved ſo fatal to the improvement and liberties of mankind. Inſtead of thoſe happy diſtinctions which furniſh incentives to genius; inſtead of that variety of arts and ſciences which owe their exiſtence to bold and original efforts of divided nations, there muſt have ſubſiſted, throughout the earth, an uniformity of conduct and manners ſubverſive of all liberal enterprize.

The

The different ages of ſociety, like the different ages of man, require different diſcipline and culture. The maxims of policy applicable to one part of the world, are not always applicable to another; nor are the full advantages of any local œconomy reconcilcable, perhaps, with ſubordination to a general ſyſtem. If therefore the beſt inſtituted government falls ſhort of perfection, in order to improve its advantages it is neceſſary to circumſcribe its dominion. To fix indeed mathematically the proportion of territory or of people, which is moſt conſiſtent with public proſperity, and with the benefits of civil life, is an impoſſible problem in the ſcience of government. But it is certain there are limits with regard to both; and all the inconveniencies of univerſal dominion will be felt, in an inferior degree, throughout an extended empire.

Public affairs there ſink into a quieſcent form, genius is fettered by authority, or borne

borne down by the weight of the prevailing ſyſtem.

In ſmall ſtates men of wiſdom have ariſen, whoſe credit with the community has enabled them to patronize arts, and to conduct plans of public utility to the moſt ſucceſsful iſſue. Legiſlators and politicians, acting at ſome favourable criſis, have been known, within a narrow circle, to controul eſtabliſhed cuſtoms and manners, to reform civil inſtitutions, and to innovate in all the eſſentials of government. But the reformation of a wide domain is an immenſe and laborious work, that needs a long preparation of time, and preſuppoſes an intercourſe with regions enlightened by philoſophy and learning.

The reformation by Peter the Great is one of the moſt memorable in the annals of extended government. The flouriſhing condition of the arts in the ſyſtem of nations,

tions, with which he connected his empire, was peculiarly favourable to the grandeur of his views.

The Czar availed himſelf of the conjuncture. Like the founders of antient ſtates, he travelled into foreign nations to ſtudy mechanical and commercial arts, and legiſlative wiſdom, and the whole ſcience of government. By inviting artiſts and manufacturers from thoſe nations to reſide in his empire, he tried, by their example, to allure his people into the occupations of civil life. To a profound diſcernment of his true intereſts, and to conſummate ſagacity in forming commercial and civil plans, he added all the qualifications moſt conducive to their ſucceſs. Boldneſs, vigour, perſeverance, he poſſeſſed in an eminent degree. And the example of a ſovereign, who was himſelf a proficient in the detail of the arts, muſt have produced a wonderful effect on a people over whom

his authority was unlimited. The eſtabliſhment too of a ſtanding army, which confirmed that authority, and carried his commands with irreſiſtible force through the remoteſt provinces, tended to ſtrengthen and maintain all his other eſtabliſhments. And at laſt his triumphs in arms, which, at the treaty of Newſtadt, rendered him the arbiter of the North, and ſecured the tranquillity of his empire, favoured all the plans of his interior policy.

Yet ſo glorious a reign could animate a few parts only, without infuſing life or vigour into ſo vaſt a body. The maxims of his policy have been purſued with ability by ſome of his ſucceſſors on the throne of the Ruſſias; and, above all, the preſent Empreſs, by the protection of arts, by the eſtabliſhments of her police, and by a well-digeſted code of internal laws, emulates the honours of her illuſtrious predeceſſor; perhaps,

perhaps, in ſome inſtances, eclipſes his fame. But it is the misfortune of Catharine, as of Peter, to execute plans on too large a ſcale: and, with ſo rare advantages, it is by the courteſy of Europe, if the Ruſſians, at this day, are permitted to rank among civilized nations. The limits of the empire muſt be contracted, to give rapidity to its movements. And the late acceſſion of territory, how greatly ſoever it may augment the revenue, or the ſplendor of the ſovereign, tends in reality to encumber, in thoſe regions, the efforts of the human ſpecies. So repugnant is the genius of extended government to refinement and liberal arts.

The hiſtory of the Chineſe alone ſeems to form an exception to the general theory. And it muſt be owned, that if a few nations have touched a higher ſtage of civility and refinement than that people, there

is none on the records of the world, who have enjoyed, for ſo extended a period, along with a large proportion of public felicity, a mediocrity in arts and ſciences.

Yet if the ſciences in that empire are not on the decline, they ſeem for ages to have been ſtationary, or ſlowly progreſſive, and certainly have not arrived at ſuch maturity and perfection as might be expected from the length of their courſe. Authority is there deciſive of public opinion, and abridges the liberty of private judgment. Error is conſecrated by antiquity. No ſpirit of philoſophical enquiry animates the learned; and the freer excurſions of genius are unknown.

In antient times, when the Greater and the Leſſer Aſia was divided among a number of ſtates; when Aſſyria, Phœnicia, and Egypt, formed independent governments, ſcience ſeems to have dawned upon the world

world with conſiderable luſtre. But theſe appearances gradually vaniſhed. The firſt empire of the Aſſyrians was not auſpicious to mankind. Their ſecond empire, by the union of Niniveh and Babylon, was ſtill more alarming. Yet the Aſſyrians, the Medes, and the Egyptians, maintained a ſort of balance of power, and ſeem to have flouriſhed as rival and contending nations. But no ſooner the Perſians aroſe, and the world beheld at Perſepolis a government more oppreſſive, more formidable, and more extended than had ever been erected at Niniveh, or at Babylon, than human nature was degraded in the Eaſt. And during a period of above two hundred years, while all things went forward in the Weſt in little ſtates, all things went backward throughout the immenſe provinces under the Perſian ſway.

Prior to this revolution, our acquaintance indeed with hiſtorical annals is imperfect.

It is impoſſible to deſcend into the detail of more antient government. Yet, on authorities ſacred and profane, it may be affirmed, that, long before the Perſian greatneſs, the Egyptians, and other Eaſtern nations, were in poſſeſſion of uſeful and ingenious arts, and not unacquainted with maxims of policy conducive to public felicity and order.

Egypt was divided early into diſtinct kingdoms; and the dynaſties which fill her annals conſiſted, it is probable, of contemporary, not of ſucceſſive monarchs. The reigns of her kings, before Seſoſtris, are celebrated as the reigns of the gods: and, if any credit is due to the hiſtory of that conqueror, it was perhaps the power of his arms which ſhook the foundations of antient governments, and brought on the firſt general cataſtrophe of nations.

If however the empire of Seſoſtris, like that of Alexander, devolved not entire upon his ſucceſſors, human affairs might have returned into their former courſe, or at leaſt ſome nations might have recovered their antient freedom and proſperity.

What may have happened in a period ſo remote, cannot now be determined with certainty. But, in periods well illuſtrated, great monarchies aroſe in the Eaſt: and the continent of Aſia, ſo rarely interſected by mountains or rivers, ſeems to be the natural ſeat of extended dominion.

While European governments ſo often fluctuate, enlarge or contract their limits, are torn aſunder by inteſtine commotions, or are overwhelmed with foreign irruptions, the great conteſts for dominion on the theatre of Aſia have ſeldom diverſified the form of Aſiatic eſtabliſhments. General revolutions by conqueſt, more fre-

quent in that quarter than in Europe, have not been productive of ſimilar effects. The Aſiatic governments are ſoon re-eſtabliſhed nearly on the ſame foundations; and one ſpirit predominates amidſt all the viciſſitudes of power.

The ſtability of the Chineſe government, amidſt the ſhocks and revolutions of conqueſt, is commonly alleged as a proof of the wiſdom with which it is framed. But in a country of ſuch extent and population, the diſproportion of numbers between the conquerors and the vanquiſhed, and the character of thoſe conquerors who have no fixed uſages, manners, or inſtitutions of their own to come into competition with the eſtabliſhed ſyſtem, ſufficiently account for its immutability, without regard to the degree of its perfection. And if the ſyſtem of manners, laws, and religion, eſtabliſhed in China, is not ſhaken or ſubverted by internal cauſes, it promiſes to withſtand the

moſt

moſt furious inundations of the Tartars; and may go down triumphant to the lateſt poſterity. Thus China forms an illuſtrious example of the connexion of human affairs with geographical limits. Secure on the eaſt and ſouth by the ocean, and on the weſt by inacceſſible deſerts, ſhe is vulnerable on the ſide of Tartary alone. All her military operations are exhauſted in one direction, and with one view. And by the efforts of an induſtrious and active policy, ſhe erected, many ages ago, an artificial barrier for defence, unequalled for extent or magnificence in any other age or country. But that barrier, the work of men, could not defeat the intention of nature; and in defiance of their wall, it was neceſſary for the Chineſe to ſubmit to conquerors, who ſhould incorporate with them into one body, ſubject to the ſame head.

Next in magnificence to that of China, is the wall of Caucaſus, called by the Orientals the wall of Gog and Magog. It extended from the Caſpian to the Black Sea, and is ſuppoſed by ſome antiquarians to have been built by Alexander the Great, in order to cover the frontiers of his empire from the incurſions of the Scythians. But it is probably a more antient fabric. The lofty ſpirit of Alexander would hardly have ſtooped to ſuch daſtardly policy; nor does it appear from the courſe of Alexander's victories, that he ever approached the Caſpian gates.

Such ſtupendous monuments of art declare the ſenſe of Aſia concerning the magnitude of impending dangers; and equally indicate talents for pacific enterprize, and an incapacity for war. Yet if Aſia were divided and ſubdivided like Europe, climate alone would not give riſe to

and

and perpetuate ſuch general ſervitude. And if the deſcription of Europe reſembled that of Aſia, our climates would not be productive of freedom. The extended government of the Romans came to be as violent and tyrannical as Eaſtern deſpotiſm. To maintain, therefore, a due balance of power, and to prevent the rapacity of ſovereigns from tranſgreſſing thoſe geographical limits which nature ſeems to have affixed to dominion, is an object of the firſt importance to the general liberties of Europe.

It ought alſo to be remembered by ſovereigns graſping at dominion, that if, by the connivance or ſupineneſs of other powers, they are ſuffered to attain the ends of their ambition, they aſſume a dangerous preeminence; they exchange for precarious greatneſs, the moſt ſolid advantages, and, by the magnitude of dominion, in a coun-

try

ry-like Europe, are likely to precipitate its fall. Let them remember the counſel of Auguſtus Cæſar to his ſucceſſors, "never "to enlarge the territories of the Ro- "mans;" and learn, from the example of that great people, to avoid the paths which lead firſt indeed to the ſubverſion of civil liberty, but finally to the diſſolution of empire.

The diſcovery of America has opened an immenſe field to the ambition of the ſtates of Europe. Inſtead of augmenting their territorial poſſeſſions at home, they began, from that æra, to form diſtant eſtabliſhments by conqueſt or by colonization, and to erect, in another hemiſphere, a new ſpecies of empire. But between countries ſo widely ſeparated, a political union ſubſiſts with difficulty: and when diſcontents ariſe, diſtance from the ſeat of government affords

affords ſingular advantages to provinces that meditate revolt.

Local preference can never be rendered conſiſtent with the beſt ends of government. The relation of a colony to the antient country, rightly underſtood, is a relation of perfect equality. The terms which denote parental and filial relation, when deſcriptive of local ties, and intended to diſtinguiſh the cultivators of the antient ſoil from the cultivators of territory more recently acquired, are metaphors extremely liable to abuſe. The one country is no more the mother, than it is the daughter. They are both the children of the ſame political parent, and that parent is the government to which they owe equal allegiance.

But, when colonies are regarded in the light of ſubordinate provinces, as appendages to government, and not entitled to

the ſame privileges and immunities with the parent-ſtate, the lovers of civil liberty will acquieſce with reluctance in ſuch invidious diſtinctions. Jealouſies ripen into diſaffection. Political independency figures in the imagination, and is aſpired after as an elevation of rank.

The fabric of *colonial* ſubordination in all the governments of Europe ſeems to ſtand in need of repair. And unhappily, the freeſt of thoſe governments was the firſt to be made ſenſible of its defects [*B*].

When the paſſions of a divided public were wound up to the higheſt pitch, when the charges of injuſtice, oppreſſion, tyranny on one ſide, were retorted on the other by thoſe of ſedition, ingratitude, rebellion, argument and ſound reaſoning were little regarded in the conteſt. And at the inſtant when the wiſdom of the Britiſh councils reſolved, by the fulleſt communi-

cation

cation of privilege, and the moſt liberal conſtruction of provincial claims, to remove every ground of jealouſy and diſtruſt, the inſidious interpoſition of a common enemy defeated the generous plan.

The Rubicon was already paſſed; and the colonies had dared to commit their cauſe to the events of war.

Perhaps there is room to hope that a ſenſe of common intereſt may ſtill prevail; that mutual affection and regard may again revive in people of the ſame manners, the ſame religion, and the ſame blood; and that ſome medium may yet be found to disjoin the American councils and arms from thoſe of France, and re-unite them, by more natural and indiſſoluble ties, to the Britiſh monarchy. To the ſtate of pupillage and dependence, which ſeems indeed to be at an end, may ſucceed a connexion of a more equal and dignified

nature,

nature, favourable to the happineſs and grandeur of both countries, and in which both countries may acquieſce with honour. But if mutual attachment fail, to recal American allegiance by the power of our arms, if not an impracticable, is certainly a moſt hazardous attempt. It is to contend, in ſome degree, with that courſe of nature, which ſo often emancipates colonies at the age of manhood, and with all thoſe local circumſtances which threaten the diſruption of empire.

The geographical diviſions of the American continent are certainly auſpicious to civil liberty; and ſeem to oppoſe the eſtabliſhment of ſuch extended governments as have proved, in the antient hemiſphere, a ſource of the moſt deſtructive and debaſing ſervitude.

The local circumſtances under review, whoſe operations in ſo many inſtances, are fully

fully diſcernible, ſolve, we may believe, in part, the hiſtories of other countries, where appearances are more equivocal; and aided or oppoſed by other cauſes, have been and will be attended with conſequences proportionably ſerious and important all over the globe. By their immediate connexion with interior policy, they are, to a ſtate conſidered apart from every other, of no ſmall account. But in the mutual relations of a number of ſtates, the territory of each, and the nature of its frontiers, by affecting political independency and the balance of power, preſent conſiderations of ſtill ſuperior moment.

To ſtand ſequeſtered and alone is as fatal to the genius of governments as to that of men; and the nobleſt enterprizes of art, or exertions of policy, may often be referred to ſituations which have excited the rivalſhip, the jealouſy, and even the antipathy of nations. Happy, in this reſpect, were the governments

ments of antient Greece. Happy, on a larger ſcale, the governments of modern Europe. Poſterity may perhaps contemplate the bleſſings of an equal and liberal intercourſe, more widely diſſeminated. They may contemplate, from a concurrence of various cauſes and events, ſome of which are haſtening into light, the greater part or even the whole habitable globe, divided among nations free and independent in all the interior functions of government, forming one political and commercial ſyſtem. Or, perhaps, while every people is capable of progreſs, there is an incompatibility in the contemporary civilization of different regions: nor ought we to expect that perfection, which ſeems to be denied to every work of man, in the regulations of commerce, in the ſcience of politics, or in the arts of civil government.

But

But I launch not on the immense ocean of poſſibility, and of future contingency. To compare paſt events, to eſtimate the actual attainments of men, and to point out their connexion with mechanical and local cauſes, is my immediate province.

NOTES.

NOTE [*A*], p. 248.

THE political ſervitude of the Tartars is thus accounted for in the theory of Monteſquieu.

In Aſia there is properly no temperate zone. Without that gradation in the races of mankind which obtains in Europe, the ſtrong nations are immediately oppoſed to the weak. The Tartars accordingly make conqueſts in the ſouth of Aſia, the region of pure deſpotiſm. But the deſpotiſm, congenial with thoſe climates, is embraced by the conquerors, and fixing its roots in a great empire, extends its branches in all directions, till they finally overſhadow the plains of Tartary, and ſtretch a far way to the North. Thus the part of Tartary, which bred the conquerors of China, is now annexed to the Chineſe empire. And even among the independent tribes, deſpotiſm, by the contagion of example, is equally predominant.

In

In parts of Tartary, colonized by the Chineſe, the people are become mortal enemies to the parent ſtate; yet transferring to their new manſions the ſervile ſpirit of the Chineſe government, they remain, under a ſeparate eſtabliſhment, ſubject to deſpotic ſway.

L'Eſprit des Loix, l. 17, ch. 5.

NOTE [*B*], p. 268.

MR. HUME, in the firſt volume of his Eſſays, delivers an obſervation which ought, he contends, to be fixed as an univerſal axiom in politics, "that though free governments have been commonly the moſt happy "for thoſe who partake of their freedom; yet "are they the moſt ruinous and oppreſſive to "their provinces." But the maxim, though plauſible in theory, and illuſtrated by the examples of Rome and Carthage, ought not to be eſtabliſhed without limitation and reſerve.

The ſyſtem of colonizing among the Greeks was the moſt ſplendid that can well be imagined. Their colonies were conſidered from the beginning, as riſing ſtates flouriſhing under the guardianſhip and patronage of the antient governments; and were ſuffered, withc

louſy or diſtruſt, to riſe to equal eminence and diſtinction. On the moſt amicable and generous footing, an intercourſe was long maintained between the colony and the antient government, tending to their mutual proſperity.

But as a colony, thus eſtabliſhed, evidences rather a generous dereliction of ſovereignty in the parent ſtate, than the moderate exerciſe of its dominion, the example of the Greeks will hardly be conſidered as forming an exception from the above maxim concerning the peculiar ſeverity of provincial government, as exerciſed by free ſtates. Yet, if we paſs from antient to modern times, it may be affirmed that, before the date of the preſent conteſt, the conduct of the Engliſh towards colonies, was leſs exceptionable than that of any other European ſtate. Spain and Portugal, not content with the advantages of an excluſive commerce, derive a direct revenue from their American ſettlements: and the firſt attempt of England to imitate the example of thoſe imperious and arbitrary ſtates, created diſcontents which were the immediate fore-runners of revolt. Though the government of Spain had ſcarce any merit either in projecting, or in effectuating ſettlements upon the

the continent of America, the jealouſy of that government with regard to thoſe ſettlements knew no bounds.—Of late, indeed, a more enlightened policy in the court of Madrid has ſomewhat relaxed the rigour of oppreſſion. England treated its colonies for a long time with neglect, and urged the higheſt pretenſions to dominion, at that period when they were the moſt capable of reſiſtance.

That provincial government, as it has been generally conducted, has been a ſyſtem of preference or reſtraint, is conſonant to the experience of ages. And the author of *Obſervations on the Nature and Value of Civil Liberty*, has rightly numbered all ſuch governments among thoſe which deſerve to be accounted tyrannical and oppreſſive. England can only claim the equivocal praiſe of being leſs tyrannical and oppreſſive than the reſt of Europe.

"In what way, then," ſays a writer of ſound political diſcernment, "has the policy of "Europe contributed to the firſt eſtabliſhment, "or to the preſent grandeur of the colonies of "America? In one way, and in one way only, "it has contributed a good deal. *Magna parum* "*Mater!* It bred and formed the men who

" were capable of achieving ſuch great actions,
" and of laying the foundation of ſo great an
" empire; and there is no other quarter of the
" world of which the policy is capable of
" forming, or has ever actually and in fact
" formed ſuch men. The colonies owe to the
" policy of Europe the education and great
" views of their active and enterprizing
" founders; and ſome of the greateſt and moſt
" important of them owe to it ſcarce any thing
" elſe."

Dr. Smith's Enquiry, &c. vol. ii. p. 189.

ESSAY VIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE fate of nations often depends on circumſtances apparently the moſt trivial. The genius, the life, perhaps the temporary humour of a ſingle man may, on ſome occaſions, fix the political arrangements that affect the eſſential intereſts of one half of the globe.

Local circumſtances are ſo blended in their operations with a variety of other cauſes, that it is difficult to define them with ſuch preciſion as were neceſſary to form an eſtimate of their comparative importance. Hence the confuſion, on this

ſubject, which fills the volumes of the learned. A writer * of the firſt rank, who illuſtrates and adorns the hiſtory of mankind with plauſible and ingenious theory, has aſſigned to *phyſical* cauſes an almoſt unlimited empire. Another writer †, no leſs illuſtrious, contracts into a point the ſphere of their dominion. Their priority in the order of things, and their ſuppoſed permanency, have been urged by other writers, as deciſive of ſuperior ſway. But it deſerves to be remembered, that cauſes *phyſical* in their nature, are often *moral* only in their operations; that theſe operations are limited and precarious, and relative to the conjuncture; that a people may be long incapable to avail themſelves of external advantages, that circumſtances ultimately beneficial, may have proved for a long while incommodious or deſtructive; and,

* Monteſquieu. † Hume.

conſe-

conſequently, that the importance of local ſtation, far from being permanent, varies not only with the contingencies of the natural world, but with the courſe of political events, and the general ſtate of human improvement.

A ſettlement conducing, at one period, to render the natives fierce, treacherous, and inhoſpitable, may be inſtrumental at another period, in rendering them civil and humane.

Before the æra of navigation, a ſettlement on an iſland, or the command of an extenſive and commodious coaſt, might have conferred no advantages on the poſſeſſors; or rather circumſtances, of ſuch ineſtimable account in a commercial age, might, by cutting off all communication with the reſt of the ſpecies, have proved, in every former æra, invincible obſtacles to

the

the civil arts. Our inſular ſituation, ſo fertile a ſource of national ſecurity, opulence, and grandeur, rendered us long an uncultivated and ſequeſtered people:

——Penitus toto diviſos orbe Britannos.

And the neglect with which Britons were once treated in the ſociety of nations, is compenſated only by that attention which their poſterity command. While nations on the continent of Europe maintain their barriers with difficulty, and at an enormous expence, and, if they will conſult their ſecurity, muſt often court alliances, and obſerve, with jealous attention, the minuteſt variations in the balance of power, Great Britain is exempted from ſuch anxious ſolicitude. By collecting her forces within herſelf, by avoiding continental wars, which exhauſt, to little purpoſe, her treaſure and her blood, and by rendering the improvement of her maritime ſtrength, the

fixed and ſteady object of her policy, ſhe may maintain, in defiance of powerful confederacies, that poſt of honour and diſtinction, which ſeems to have drawn upon her the envy of nations, who now take advantage of internal calamities to inſult her fortune.

The æra of navigation opened a new ſpecies of correſpondence among men: and, in the infancy of the art, a civil ſettlement might be attended with peculiar advantages, which there could be no poſſibility of tranſmitting, in their full extent, to future generations. In the territory of the Phœnicians, neither large nor fertile, yet lying along a commodious coaſt, we obſerve ſources of opulence and renown. That country, oppreſſed at firſt by the violence of the Aſſyrians, but afterwards ſo well adapted to the commercial circumſtances of the antient world, called forth in its people correſponding exertions, and

both

both invited them to undertake, and favoured the execution of early enterprizes as a maritime power. While the Egyptians, in the fullneſs of riches and of pride, and in the ſpirit of an unſocial form of ſuperſtition, had ſhut their ports againſt mankind, and renounced all foreign correſpondence; it was the glory of the Phœnicians to venture beyond the boundaries of antient navigation, and, by commercial enterprize, to diffuſe arts and civility over the weſtern regions. Bred up in habits of frugality and domeſtic induſtry, the conſequence of ſcanty and penurious poſſeſſions, they purſued an œconomical, not a luxurious commerce. The commodities of every country were embarked on Phœnician bottoms; and as merchants, or factors, or navigators, they created a ſort of univerſal dependence, and conducted, almoſt excluſively, the traffic of the world.

What

What the Phœnicians were, in early times, relatively to the nations on the Mediterranean coaſt; what the Hanſe Towns and the Dutch lately were, relatively to the other European ſtates; the commercial towns all over Europe are, at this day, relatively to the reſt of the earth. The maritime efforts of the Greeks leſſened the importance of Phœnicia. The maritime efforts of the Engliſh, and of other powers, have ſunk the importance of the Dutch commonwealth. The fall of Europe will mark, perhaps, at ſome future æra, the enterprize of the ſpecies at large; or Europe may only ſeem to fall, while ſhe advances to more abſolute greatneſs, and ſuperior opulence, though of leſs relative importance in the political ſcale.

But to return to early times: Carthage, a colony planted by the Phœnicians, and inheriting the commercial genius of the parent ſtate, flouriſhed by the ſame arts,

and grew ſuperior to all nations in naval power. Content with the empire of the ſea alone, ſhe might have bid defiance, on that element, to the arms of Rome. But the neglect of her marine, the conſequence of a long ſtruggle for dominion on the continent of Europe, rendered her vulnerable on her own coaſts. More attentive to the levying of armies, compoſed chiefly of foreign mercenaries, than to the equipment of fleets, in which alone her genius was peculiarly formed to excel, ſhe allowed a maritime aſcendancy to a powerful rival. And, in theſe circumſtances, the jealouſy of other ſtates, and inteſtine diviſions, co-operated with the Roman vengeance and ambition in the extinction of the Carthaginian name.

Corinth, ſituated on an iſthmus, in the centre of Greece, and equally connected with the Ægean and Ionian ſhores, is an example of a city which united with ſigna

advantage

advantages for navigation thoſe of inland trade. It derived accordingly, from ſo fortunate a coincidence, wealth, ſplendor, and magnificence. As a mart of trade, it was no leſs reſorted to than Carthage itſelf. They have been called, emphatically, the two eyes of the Mediterranean coaſt, and were deſtroyed in one year by the Romans. The city of Corinth was reſtored by Julius Cæſar; the city of Carthage, by Auguſtus. But it was not poſſible to reſtore, under the Roman yoke, that combination of circumſtances which had rendered illuſtrious the antient poſſeſſors of the ſame ſettlements. Corinth was no longer the capital of a little monarchy, ſurrounded by free ſtates, eminent for arts and ſciences. And the new city of Carthage, in the form of a Roman colony, gives us no idea of that city which had been the pride of Africa, and the envy of Rome.

The aſpiring genius of the Roman people was not formed for commercial arts. During the firſt ages of the commonwealth they remained totally unacquainted with maritime affairs. A Carthaginian galley, driven by accident on the coaſts of Italy, preſented them with the firſt model of a ſhip of war. But when naval armaments appeared to be eſſential to that plan of univerſal dominion after which they aſpired, they became intent upon theſe objects, and purſued them with unremitting ardor and aſtoniſhing ſucceſs. The mercantile ſpirit and the love of ingenious arts conducted the Phœnicians, the Carthaginians, and the Greeks, to diſtinction and eminence as maritime powers. Among theſe nations trade was the principal aim in navigation; war only a collateral object. But this natural order of things was reverſed at Rome. The martial ſpirit alone led to the eſtabliſhment of a marine, which triumphed

over

over the efforts of all the commercial ſtates known in the antient world, and rendered the Romans themſelves in ſome degree commercial, when no longer a warlike people. It was the ſame ſpirit which raiſed up ſuddenly for Mithridates (for he diſclaimed all regard to commercial objects, as beneath his dignity) ſuch formidable fleets, as inſulted the Romans on their own coaſts, when, by the annihilation of rival powers, they ſeemed to be in full poſſeſſion of maritime empire.

Sometimes local ſituation ſuggeſts correſpondent deſigns of great magnitude and importance. Sometimes deſigns ſuggeſted by other conſiderations are hence only conducted to a more brilliant or more ſucceſsful iſſue. In both theſe ways, in the remote ages of antiquity, the Cretans, the Rhodians, and other ſtates, availed themſelves of happy ſituations in the purſuits of commercial and civil greatneſs.

But local advantages, fluctuating and precarious, often derive their ſole account from the temporary condition of the world. It was hence that, long before the fall of Carthage and of Corinth, in conſequence of the diſcovery of the Indian ſea, Alexandria began to flouriſh, and became deſtined from that diſcovery alone, to be the great emporium of trade between the eaſt and weſt. Its ſituation between Tyre and Carthage was convenient for commanding ſome ſhare of the lucrative trade of which theſe cities had been ſo long poſſeſſed. Tyre was already no more: and Carthage regarded with a jealous eye the erection of a port, which, under the protection of the king of Macedon, might ſupplant her in no ſmall degree. To produce this effect, as well as to ſecure his conqueſt of Egypt, ſeems to have been the view of Alexander in laying the foundations of his new city. But he perceived not then the ſource of its importance. It was his expedition into the Indies alone

which could have opened his eyes on the proſpect of its future grandeur. This forms a memorable epoch. The boundaries of commerce being enlarged, and a maritime correſpondence opened between the Indies and the weſtern nations, the commodities of the eaſt, which had been uſually carried down the Oxus, and along the Caſpian ſea, began to be diverted into the channel of Egypt. The Indian trade indeed remained long inconſiderable; nor did it abandon of a ſudden its antient courſe. But in proportion as this change took place under the Ptolemies, and under the Romans, the reſort to Alexandria became conſpicuous. In one month, ſays Joſephus, it ſupplied the treaſury of Rome with more riches than all the reſt of Egypt ſupplied in a year. And from the reduction of Egypt into a Roman province by Auguſtus, to the conqueſt of that country by the Saracens, a period of above ſeven hundred years, the port of Alex-

andria was the moſt noted mart in the world. Nor was it leſs renowned as the ſeat of philoſophy and the liberal arts. In the fall of this city we bewail that of learning itſelf, which underwent, upon that ſpot, the moſt fatal cataſtrophes recorded in the annals of time.

Such ſettlements then, as have been mentioned, combined with the peculiar circumſtances of antiquity, had a diſcernible connexion with commercial and civil arts. As commerce therefore, in the ordinary courſe of things, ſeems to make a people flouriſh; a ſettlement conducive to that end is numbered among the cauſes of public proſperity. Yet commerce itſelf, as miniſtering to luxury, was diſcountenanced by the maxims of antient policy; and on the excluſion of it, Rome, and Sparta, and other antient ſtates ſeem to have propoſed to found their greatneſs. This policy, violent indeed and unnatural, ſuited only the

genius

genius of martial and heroic times. Yet from hence it appears, that the complexion and temper of an age, by diverſifying national objects, will diverſify proportionably the inherent advantages of any local eſtabliſhment.

The ſpirit of commerce, which actuates modern ages, has opened a new path of ambition. And though there are diſadvantages inſeparable from this ſpirit; though the detail of modern governments affords a leſs ſplendid theme to the hiſtorian than that preſented in the tranſactions of antiquity; yet the civil and moral order of the world is certainly advanced by this great revolution in the views and proceedings of ſtates.

But if the policy of the antients had been more generally directed to commercial objects, yet their maritime operations, we may obſerve, were neceſſarily circumſcribed: and local advantages, once of high eſti-

mation, become afterwards comparatively of ſmall importance, and almoſt diſappear in an age when the general uſe of the compaſs, and the various improvements in navigation ſo far enlarge the ſphere of enterprize, and maintain an intercourſe between regions the moſt remote.

In the progreſs of arts, the local advantages of mankind all over the globe ſeem to approach nearer to an equality. There ariſe more incentives to rouze the induſtry of nations. And a paſſage being opened in every country for the collective treaſures of the earth, general competition and demand ſecure emoluments and rewards to every people, more accurately proportioned to the meaſure of active exertions, and the wiſdom by which they are directed. Riches or poverty muſt no longer be eſtimated by the poſition of a people on the globe. Art, if I may ſay ſo, alters the diſpenſation of nature, and maintains a ſort of diſtributive

juſtice

juſtice in the diviſion of opulence among mankind. Such at leaſt would be the tendency of things, if all reſtrictions on trade were aboliſhed by a concert among nations, calculated for the common benefit of all. But mutual jealouſies derange and encumber their mutual efforts. If, in order to keep in view of the coaſt, it was often neceſſary for antient navigators to prefer the more tedious to the ſhorter voyage, a ſimilar neceſſity is ſuperinduced upon the modern, by the abſurdity of commercial regulations. It is the relative proſperity of mankind merely which enters into the views of ſovereigns. And no regulation, however beneficial to nations, will ever be eſtabliſhed, by their unanimous conſent, if, by any unequal augmentation of opulence or power, it tends to break the rules of proportion, and affects the order in which theſe nations ſtand arranged on the general ſcale. But if national monopolies, founded on the jealouſy of ſovereigns, may

ſometimes, as connected with public ſecurity, be vindicated on the maxims of ſound policy; yet, ſurely, no ſuch jealouſy can reaſonably ſubſiſt among communities under the ſame government. On that government at leaſt, in reaſon and in juſtice, they have an equal claim. Yet regulations partial and oppreſſive we have ſeen in our days, and are too likely to ſee, diſſolved by violence, which ought to have been diſſolved in part by the mature wiſdom of enlightened councils. Public reformation indeed muſt be gradual, and ſuch as the times will bear. What is beſt in theory is not always attainable in practice: and a wiſe government will proceed, with caution, in authorizing changes, however juſt, reaſonable, and beneficial to the community at large, that are oppoſed to prejudices grown inveterate by age. Every approach, however, towards an equal legiſlation, that can be made without diſturbing the public tranquillity, obviates the danger

of

of rising discontents, and tends ultimately to the harmony and stability of civil societies.

But I enter not into these complicated and nice discussions. And with regard to the tendency of national monopolies, and the genius of exclusive companies, I will beg leave to refer my readers for the fullest information to *an. Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations:* a work which will, probably, in future times, be referred to in political science as the first just and systematical account, that has appeared in any language, of the principles of public œconomy, and the phœnomena of commercial states.

Besides the influence of commerce, there are other causes, in the progress of general improvement, by which the importance of civil settlements is materially affected.

The

The encreaſe of a people in a barren ſoil led formerly, by a ſpecies of neceſſity, to plans of migration, of rapine, or of conqueſt. And civilized nations in the antient world were able with difficulty to defend their frontiers, when aſſailed by hungry and deſperate barbarians. But when arts and induſtry began to be excited in thoſe countries, which, for want of tillage and cultivation, had remained deſolate and barren, one cauſe began to be removed, which diſturbed the repoſe of nations. Thus the Danes, and other people in the high northern latitudes, ſubſiſting leſs precariouſly on the fruits of their own induſtry, than their forefathers ſubſiſted by piracy war, ceaſed to preſs with their incumbent weight the neighbouring ſtates, and permitted government to advance throughout the reſt of Europe. But if rude armies, as hoſtile and fierce as ever iſſued from the ſtorehouſe of nations, were again to appear on the frontiers of any European ſtate, the

conteſt

conteſt would not be dubious; the aſſailants only would feel the blow. By the invention of fire-arms, which has changed by degrees the whole ſyſtem of war, there reſides a power of reſiſtance in every flouriſhing ſtate, to which the moſt furious efforts of rude and deſperate heroiſm were oppoſed in vain. War is now conducted at an expence which the exertions of induſtry can alone ſupply; and that ſuperiority in arms which once reſided with rude and poor nations, is transferred in modern ages to the nations advanced in opulence and credit. Yet the diffuſion of knowledge gradually tends to reduce mankind more nearly to a level in the enterprizes of peace and war. And that ſingular invention, which ſeemed calculated for the deſtruction of mankind, and which actually enabled a few adventurers from Europe to annex a hemiſphere to its dominion, tends in the iſſue to render battles leſs bloody,

conqueſt-

conqueſts leſs rapid, and governments more ſecure than in any former period.

Upon the whole, we obſerve local advantages, which fluctuate in every age, and often owe their exiſtence and duration to a train of independent events, to be of the leaſt relative moment in the moſt flouriſhing ſtage of the arts and ſciences. That intercourſe, however, which navigation opens, though abundantly ſufficient for the purpoſes of mercantile traffic and exchange, can ſeldom form between diſtant nations ſo intimate connexions as ariſe from vicinity of ſettlement. Geographical relation therefore will always be, in ſome degree, inſtrumental in retarding or accelerating, in every country, the progreſs of civil life. Communities, as well as private perſons, are formed by example. And the character of a people muſt bear a reſemblance in manners, in genius, and in

arts,

arts, to that which predominates in the ſyſtem with which they are more immediately connected. Civility and rudeneſs being diſtributed like light and darkneſs in the natural world, contiguous nations are often contemporary in their progreſs and decline: and the more enlightened regions, tho' always ſhifting, form at any one time a complete and undivided whole ſituated around a common centre. But the various circumſtances hitherto under review, ought to be conſidered rather as occaſions of proſperous or adverſe fortune, than as direct cauſes of human perfection or debaſement. The former ought, by no means, to be confounded with the latter; nor the local circumſtances we have mentioned, with that more myſterious influence which, reaching the principles of our nature, is ſuppoſed to produce original and conſtitutional differences in the human ſpecies.

ESSAY IX.

OF THE RELATION OF MAN TO THE SURROUNDING ELEMENTS.

LOCAL circumſtances have been pointed out as of various import; as diſſuaſives from, or as incentives to action, as occaſions of ſucceſs or diſappointment to national enterprize, and as more or leſs auſpicious to the origin and progreſs of arts and ſciences. But there is, in the opinion both of the vulgar and the learned, another and more immediate dependence of the ſpecies on external things; which, preſiding with various effect over human nature itſelf, antecedently determine its character.

Our

Our external frame, like every ſyſtem of matter, is ſubject to mechanical laws. It is liable accordingly to annoyance from all the elements; and changes introduced into the body cannot, conſiſtently with the law of their union, be indifferent to the mind. That ſtate of the medium, that temperature of heat and cold, thoſe productions of ſoil and ſpecies of aliment which correſpond beſt with our corporeal fabric, tend to the freer and more vigorous exerciſe of all the mental powers. Yet natural hiſtorians, who deſcribe man as an animal merely, allow him in that capacity ſome diſtinguiſhing prerogatives. While the elements ſwarm with life; while earth, ſea, and air are peopled with their proper inhabitants; while different tribes have habitations aſſigned to them in particular corners of the globe, where alone they can find ſubſiſtence; man erects for himſelf a manſion in every country, ſubſiſts on a variety of aliment prepared or unprepared by art,

and

and breathes with equal freedom in the frozen or in the burning zone. Races of animals that exiſted in paſt times ſeem now to be totally extinct. The largeſt and ſtrongeſt of quadrupeds, according to M. Buffon, has diſappeared in the animal world*; nor does he think it impoſſible that, conſiſtently with the order of nature, animals of one common ſtock may have been ſo diverſified and transformed by the viciſſitudes of the globe, as to conſtitute diſtinct ſpecies. The animals of the new and of the old continent may have had one common original; and perhaps of man alone it can be ſaid in the ſtricteſt ſenſe,

Genus immortale manet———

The human frame at leaſt is more fixed and immutable than any other; and more exempted from that influence which pre-

* Hiſt. Nat. tome xviii. p. 178.

vails through the gradations of animal and vegetable life [*A*].

There is no one country on the face of the earth which is declared, by general conſent, to be the fitteſt reſidence for man. That influence of the heavens ſeems to be relatively the beſt, which habit has rendered the moſt familiar. And to exchange of a ſudden one climate for another, is always hazardous for any tribe or people. Yet the poſitive malignancy of no climate of the world can be inferred from the dangers which are ſo often conſequent on the migrations of mankind. Our phyſical habits are eſtabliſhed or diſſolved by ſlow degrees; violent tranſitions ſeem repugnant to nature, and often threaten our conſtitution with deſtruction. But if it can reſiſt the impetuoſity of the ſhock, the body accommodates itſelf by degrees to its new condition. Things offenſive become indif-

ferent, or even agreeable; things noxious, innocent, or salutary, and in time perhaps so essential that no danger were more to be apprehended than a return to antient habits. Emigrants can learn only from experience the peculiarities of other climates; and, in the course of that experience, they struggle with a series of calamity, from which the natives of those climates are exempt; and from which the posterity of those emigrants will be exempt in all succeeding generations. If we may judge then from the first impressions on our animal œconomy, the external constitution of nature in the different climates of the earth tends rather to discourage than to promote the distant migrations of mankind. Yet, in another view, it is this diversity of climate which accounts for the dispersion of nations, and the general revolutions of conquest. In a flourishing period indeed of civil and commercial arts, a nation can

be encumbered with exceſſive population. But the more ſimple ages are unacquainted with ſuch variety of reſources. Bold adventure is ever more welcome to barbarians, than the ſlow proceedings of art; and they even ſcorn to accompliſh by induſtry what valour alone may effect. In this ſpirit was the anſwer of Brennus to the Romans when queſtioned, at the ſiege of Cluſium, concerning his pretenſions on Tuſcany*, "That his pretenſions lay in his "ſword; and all things belonged to the "brave." He added alſo on more plauſible foundations, after reminding the Romans of ſome paſſages in their own ſtory, that lands which remained neglected, and which the natives were in no condition to cultivate, could not be ſaid to be excluſively pre-occupied or appropriated by any people. In an exigency then, like that of the Tranſalpine Gauls, it is natural for rude ſtates to ſend forth colonies to people, or

* Tit. Liv. l. v. c. 36.

armies

armies to ſubdue the earth. And the incumbrance from population, which forms ſuch an exigency, will be chiefly felt in the ſeverer climates, and in the moſt ungrateful ſoil. Hence, in later times, the irruption of the northern barbarians who deſolated and ſubdued Europe. Their numbers, encreaſing faſter than their induſtry or the productions of the ſoil could keep pace with, created a ſpecies of neceſſity which, ſuperior to all other conſiderations, authorized their firſt movements. And the fortune of the firſt adventurers, by raiſing expectation, inſtigated others to run a ſimilar career. It deſerves however to be remarked, that the firſt hoſtile incurſions into a foreign country, have been uſually made for the ſake of plunder merely, without any deſign of abandoning antient poſſeſſions, or of forming new eſtabliſhments. The firſt inroads of the Barbarians into the Roman empire were conducted with this

view alone. But the deſolation of one territory led to the deſolation of another more remote; till at length a long abſence from home reconciled theſe ſoldiers of fortune to other climes; or the difficulties and dangers of a return, or the temptations of ſuperior affluence, retained them in countries more fertile than their own, better cultivated, and more adorned. No longer content with plunder, they ſeized upon the domains of the people ſubdued by their victorious arms; and erected governments on new foundations, with little regard to the policy of the vanquiſhed. Free in their own country, they maintained their freedom in the ſettlements they acquired; armies were transformed into nations; and feudal ſyſtems began to ariſe out of the arrangements of war. The connexions with the parent ſtate were gradually diſſolved. And the poſterity of thoſe emigrants, regardleſs of the country of their fore-fathers,

thers, adhered to the governments whoſe protection they enjoyed, and to the climates which gave them birth.

Such migrations and eſtabliſhments reſulted from a condition of ſociety, to which no European ſtate is likely to return for ages. Switzerland perhaps alone is conſtituted in ſuch circumſtances as ſeem to require a regular diſcharge of citizens. Yet, without arts, without manufactures, without money, ſhe has eſtabliſhed a ſpecies of commerce peculiar to herſelf, and actually derives from the numbers of her people the means of ſubſiſtence. She reſorts not, like antient ſtates, to migrations, to plunder, or to conqueſt. While ſhe cultivates peace, ſhe ſubſiſts by war; whoſe demands ſhe ſo readily ſupplies by hiring out troops indiſcriminately to the neighbouring ſtates; and this ſtrange policy of government is both the cauſe and the effect of a flouriſhing popula-

tion. But if the general circumſtances of the modern reſembled thoſe of the antient world, the Helvetic body, deſtitute of ſuch reſources, could diſencumber itſelf by no other expedients than migrations and offenſive war.

Upon the whole then we may obſerve, that the changes of ſituation on the ſurface of the globe, ſo incident to tribes and nations, far from authorizing any plea of local pre-eminence, ſerve only to demonſtrate the latitude allowed to the human conſtitution in reſpect of the variety of climate and of aliment which correſponds ſo happily with its texture.

The power of the human body to redreſs itſelf, when annoyed by the elements, is often aſtoniſhing. Under alterations of the medium more violent, more ſudden, more oppoſite than climate ever preſents, it maintains an almoſt incredible equality in

its

its own temperature. It appears from a ſeries of late experiments*, conducted by a ſociety of gentlemen every way qualified to inform the Public, that, when ſurrounded with air heated to 244° on the ſcale of Fahrenheit, the heat of the animal body deviates but little from its natural ſtandard. In the conduct too of theſe curious experiments, as well as in the unſolicited experience of ordinary life, is diſplayed the tendency of habit to correct and mitigate the effects of external annoyance.

If it is not then intenſity alone, but rather viciſſitude of temperature, which is moſt apt to annoy our frame; it would ſeem even reaſonable to infer, that nations commonly reputed the moſt ſubject to impreſſions from the external elements, are in reality the moſt exempt from their do-

* See Experiments by Charles Blagden, M. D. F. R. S. inſerted in Phil. Tranſ. for 1775.

minion;

minion; and that it is not in our variable and inconſtant climates, but under a more permanent and equal ſky, that we ought to look for the freer and more uninfluenced condition of the ſpecies.

On the other hand, it might be contended that viciſſitude itſelf, when regular and progreſſive, like the return of the ſeaſons, becoming familiar to the body, ſhocks or incommodes it in an inferior degree; and that no one ſtate of the atmoſphere, in our temperate zones, has ſuch intenſity and duration as to produce ſenſible effects on the human frame. Without entering at preſent into ſo nice a problem, let it be ſufficient to obſerve, that habit and violent tranſition, excluſively of other influence, account for a number of appearances. But it is not pretended they account for all; and how nicely ſoever advantages and diſadvantages may be balanced upon the whole,

whole, there are at leaſt ſome diſtinctions among mankind infallibly regulated by a local ſtandard.

In ſome climates of the world, the body arrives ſoon at maturity, and haſtens to a diſſolution with proportionable celerity. In other climates a longer period is allowed both for its progreſs and decline. In the ages of antiquity the Britons were remarkable for the longeſt, the Egyptians for the leaſt extended life; while the ordinary ſtandard in other countries deviated, as was ſuppoſed, more or leſs from theſe oppoſite extremes. Conſiſtently with the ſame order of ſecond cauſes, modern hiſtory informs us of a variety of people among whom the natural term of life exceeds not, or even falls below the ſtandard of Egypt; and the Britons yield, perhaps, in longevity to the more northern nations. The balance of numbers indeed may not be affected

affected by ſuch diſtinctions. If climates the moſt prolific are alſo the moſt deſtructive to the human ſpecies, the rules of proportion are not broken; and the encreaſe of mankind in one country may be as effectually advanced by the prolongation of life, as in another by a more abundant progeny. But, whether the law of mortality be ſo adjuſted or not to the law of generation, the ſtated period of life is ſomewhat variable among nations. And, if the facts were doubtful or equivocal in general hiſtory, the influence in this reſpect of local ſituations, and of air of different temper, might be aſcertained from the public regiſters of mortality in contiguous ſettlements, and under the ſame civil œconomy. The air of the Hague is reputed the beſt in Holland: the air of Amſterdam the moſt malignant: and the duration of life in thoſe two places ſeems to correſpond with this natural cauſe. To correct ſuch influences, there is perhaps ſome ſovereign antidote,

tidote, ſome controuling regimen laid up, for future generations, in the ſtores of philoſophy. But from fact to poſſibility there lies no appeal; and in all ages of the world, the term of our exiſtence, though dependent on a multiplicity of cauſes, ſeems to have had ſome reference to climate; and in general to have increaſed with the latitude. Strength and vigour of body, till we arrive at the limit of the Polar circle, are found to encreaſe in a ſimilar progreſſion.

Stature and magnitude, on the other hand, are at leaſt as conſiderable in the warmer as in the colder regions. And the moſt diminutive and dwarfiſh of the human race are perhaps the natives of the frigid zone.

The Patagonian ſtature, after exerciſing ſo long the curioſity, the ſcepticiſm, the credulity of the public, is at laſt ſufficiently

aſcertained,

aſcertained, and ſeems not to violate, in any marvellous degree, the uſual deſcription of man. But, as a contraſt to this, the world has been lately amuſed with an account of a nation, in the iſland of Madagaſcar, where the ordinary ſtature riſes not above three feet and a half. It is not, however, pretended that the Patagonians are eminent for intellectual abilities above other tribes of Barbarians; and the little people of Madagaſcar ſeem to have nothing dwarfiſh in the conſtitution of their minds. They are deſcribed, by an intelligent writer*, as a warlike people, and a match in genius, in conduct, and in enterprize, for the other natives of the iſland. Yet, without impeaching ſo reſpectable authority, we may be permitted to obſerve, that probably the ſame illuſion of imagination which magnified the dimenſions of the human figure in

* Eloge de M. Commerſon par M. de la Lande.

Patagonia,

Patagonia, has diminiſhed them in Madagaſcar. And the only admiſſible concluſion is, that in the one country as in the other, there prevails a remarkable deviation from the uſual ſtandard towards oppoſite extremes.

The exiſtence of ſuch varieties in the deſcription of man is conformable to hiſtory, and to experience, and is in part deducible from analogy and philoſophic theory. But ſuch varieties, though reſulting from the general and regular tenour of mechanical laws, afford no criterion by which to aſcertain the endowments of the underſtanding among tribes or nations. Among the natives of the ſame ſpot ſimilar diſtinctions abound, excluſive of all apparent connexion with temper, with genius, or with capacity. No hiſtorian has deſcribed that meaſure of animal ſtrength, that ſymmetry of outward form, or that natural term of exiſtence, which,

which, in the courſe of human life, is found moſt connected with the largeſt endowments and accompliſhments of the ſpecies. In every age and country theſe combinations and aſſemblages are too diſſimilar and various to form the baſis of any theory: or rather, ſuch diſſimilarity and variety demonſtrate the indifference of nature with regard to ſuch co-incidences in the ſyſtem of man. Yet the hiſtory of human reaſon is liable to be confounded with the hiſtory of mere animal diſtinctions; as if national genius or capacity could be calculated from the bills of mortality, from the gradations of colour, in different tribes, or from certain varieties in organical texture which, being either foreign to the mind, or correſponding equally with all its perfections and infirmities, touch not the eſſentials of human greatneſs.

The Tartar and Chineſe, between whom there is obſerved by travellers, an exact reſemblance

ſemblance in all the lineaments and proportions of the body, diſcover little affinity in the genius or complexion of the mind; or rather, the reſemblance in the one reſpect is not more conſpicuous than the contraſt in the other. The former people are deſcribed as bold, warlike, independent, lovers of toil, and of a ferocity approaching to brutality. The latter, as an indolent and pacific race, prone to ſuperſtition, and to ſervile dependence; addicted to compliment, and extravagant in all the ceremonials of behaviour. Thus the extremes of national character may be combined with exterior appearances nearly ſimilar.

It is alſo worthy of obſervation, that palpable defects in the animal conſtitution coincide ſo often with the perfection of the underſtanding; and palpable defects in the intellectual, with the utmoſt perfection in

all the animal powers. Some illuſtrious examples of ſuch coincidences occur among the characters of the laſt age: an age, perhaps, as fertile of intellectual talents as the world has ever ſeen. One of theſe is Lord Falkland, whoſe diſadvantages in perſon are contraſted with excellence of mind by the noble hiſtorian who has delivered his name down to poſterity as a model of perfection. Another is Sir Charles Cavendiſh, whoſe character, as delineated by the ſame maſterly hand, conveys a moral leſſon to poſterity [*B*].

The *Graces*, according to the fine alluſion of antiquity, are often to be contemplated under the form of the *Satyrs*. Such coincidences, which abound in every country, ſeem to announce the peculiar character of the human mind, its independence on the laws of mechaniſm, and its alliance with a nobler ſyſtem.

A diſ-

A diſregard of this high prerogative has contaminated, in ſome inſtances, the conduct of nations. Hence the policy of Sparta authoriſed an inſtitution the moſt ſhocking in the proceedings of mankind; that inſtitution of Lycurgus, by which children of a delicate frame were condemned to inſtant death, from a ſuppoſed connexion between intellectual and corporeal infirmity. How different is the wiſdom of nature, which uſually renders ſuch children the darling objects of parental care!

Had the Spartan rule been adopted in our age, England had not reared up a Lyttelton, nor Europe bred a Voltaire. But, in the eye of reaſon and philoſophy, this connexion diſappears; and a policy ſo repugnant to the firſt dictates of morality, derives no countenance or apology from the hiſtory of individuals or of tribes. If there ſubſiſts then no inſeparable connexion, no

neceſſary or eſtabliſhed harmony between the perfections of body and mind, the inferences from analogy are deſtitute of ſolid foundation; and the changes introduced into the former by external impulſe, will imply no correſponding changes in our moral frame.

Soil and climate ſeem to act with a gradation of influence on vegetable, animal, and intellectual nature. There are varieties of configuration, equally commodious for the animal functions; and varieties in our animal powers equally conſiſtent with the exertion of all the nobler faculties. Man, therefore, by his rank in the creation, is more exempted from mechanical dominion than the claſſes below him; and even the beauty of his perſon derives its arbitrary eſtimation from the variety of which the body is ſuſceptible, without detriment to its functions. An exalted mind in a well-

organized

organized body, is like a fine picture in a good light. Yet the exterior mechaniſm may be regarded, in ſome reſpects, as the mere drapery of nature, wherein is diſplayed all the wantonneſs of art; and which is uſually no more deciſive of the abſolute perfections of mankind, than the modes of artificial attire. But the attire of nature, like the faſhions of art, may prove cumberſome and incommodious, not only for animal but for intellectual exertions; and certain conſequences will ariſe from that myſterious union which enters into ſo complicated an exiſtence, and connects it with the vegetable and with the animal world.

It deſerves alſo to be obſerved, that the rank of man, which in ſo many reſpects renders his conſtitution ſuperior to dangerous annoyance, renders it in one reſpect more vulnerable. An animal feels only what diſturbs the animal œconomy. The

ſcenery of creation it regards with total indifference; but that ſcenery acts on a human being in a peculiar manner, and without annoying his perſon, affects the ſenſibility and delicacy of his moral frame. The organs of ſound and ſight are ſuſceptible of impreſſions which, excluſive of all arbitrary aſſociations or convention, intereſt in an eminent degree the imagination and the paſſions. Hence the elements of natural language. Hence a moral expreſſion in muſic. Hence certain graces of proportion, figure, motion; and all the fine connexions which form the foundations of criticiſm in the elegant and polite arts.

The objects with which the ſenſes are converſant, become emblematical to the imagination, and call forth a train of correſponding emotions, which are never excited in the inferior orders of animal

Some

Some predominant qualities in rude and ſavage tribes are to be aſcribed, in the opinion of ingenious writers, to the face of the country they inhabit. The emotions in the breaſt of the ſavage derive, it ſeems, a degree of wildneſs and ferocity from the chaos which ſurrounds him; and a certain adjuſtment and embelliſhment of the outward objects is requiſite to diſpel the gloom of life, to enliven and exhilarate the ſpirits, to mollify the temper, and to render it humane.

——— The attentive mind,
By this harmonious action on her pow'rs,
Becomes herſelf harmonious.

But this adjuſtment is not equally indiſpenſable throughout the habitable globe. For, independently of culture, the ſcene from the hand of nature is more or leſs magnificent, more or leſs adorned. Here are immenſe deſerts; there delicious plains.

This the region of clouds and ſtorms; that of a more placid and benignant ſky. Here predominates the beautiful; there the ſublime. The emotions hence generated correſpond; and the tone of temper and of manners is, if I may ſay ſo, in uniſon with the natural world. This ſpecies of energy, which riſes out of external things, exerts itſelf in its full effect on man alone; and ſeems to be attended with conſequences in rude and ſavage life, analogous to thoſe which reſult in the progreſs of ſociety, from various ſtyle and compoſition in the imitative and deſigning arts.

Having thus ſtated the relations of man to the elements around him, which appear to be various and complicated, it will be proper to contemplate his reſources, and to mark thoſe diſtinguiſhing prerogatives by which he endeavours

vours to maintain or to reſtore his independence, to re-act upon external things, and to become, in ſome degree, the arbiter of his own happineſs and perfec-

NOTES.

NOTE [*A*], p. 306.

THE privileges of man as an animal are inconteſtible, and wonderfully adapted to his ſuperior rank in the creation. Nous trouverons, ſays Monſ. Buffon with equal truth and elegance, nous trouverons que l'homme eſt le ſeul des êtres vivans dont la nature ſoit aſſez forte, aſſez etendue, aſſez flexible pour pouvoir ſubſiſter, ſe multiplier par-tout, et ſe preter aux influences de tous les climats de la terre; nous verrons evidemment qu'aucun des animaux n'a obtenu ce grand privilege; que loin de pouvoir ſe multiplier par-tout, la plupart ſont bornés et confinés dans des certains climats, et même dans des contrées particuliéres. L'homme eſt en tout l'ouvrage du ciel; les animaux ne ſont à beaucoup d'egards que des productions de la terre.

Hiſt. Nat. Tome xviii. p. 177.

Other diſtinctions might be mentioned no leſs conſpicuous. Nature has fixed certain ſeaſons

at which the greater part of the animal kind propagate their ſeveral ſpecies: while a ſimilar prerogative is veſted in man at all ſeaſons, and in all climates of the world.

Vide Ariſtot. de Hiſt. Animal. l. v. c. 8.

This diſtinction, in the ſchool of Socrates, was inſiſted on as an argument for a ſuperintending providence. Το δε, ſaid that maſter of wiſdom, και τας των αφροδισιων ηδονας τοις μεν αλλοις ζωοις δεναι, περιγραψαντας τε ετες χρονον ημιν δε συνεχως μεχρι γηρως ταυτας παρεχειν. Xenoph. Mem. l. i. c. 4. "Is it not well-ordered, "that, while the courtſhips of the grove are "confined to one period of the year, the period "of our loves is not thus interrupted, and is "prolonged to declining age?"

NOTE [*B*], p. 322.

I WILL beg leave to lay before the reader the eminent and worthy character mentioned in the text, as it is drawn by the moſt inſtructive, and perhaps the moſt faithful hiſtorian of the laſt age. "The converſation, "ſays Clarendon, ſpeaking of himſelf, the Chan-"cellor took moſt delight in, was that of Sir "Charles

" Charles Cavendiſh, brother to the Marquis,
" who was one of the moſt extraordinary per-
" ſons of that age, in all the noble endowments
" of the mind. He had all the diſadvantages
" imaginable in his perſon, which was not only
" of ſo ſmall a ſize, that it drew the eyes of
" men upon him; but with ſuch deformity in
" his little perſon, and an aſpect in his counte-
" nance, that was apter to raiſe contempt than
" application: but in this unhandſome or
" homely habitation, there was a mind and a
" ſoul lodged that was very lovely and beauti-
" ful; cultivated and poliſhed by all the know-
" ledge and wiſdom that arts and ſciences could
" ſupply it with. He was a great philoſopher
" in the extent of it, and an excellent mathe-
" matician, whoſe correſpondence was very
" dear to Gaſſendus and Deſcartes, the laſt of
" whom dedicated ſome of his works to him.
" He had very notable courage, and the vigour
" of his mind ſo adorned his body, that being
" with his brother the Marquis in all the war,
" he uſually went out in all parties, and was
" preſent, and charged the enemy in all battles
" with as keen a courage as could dwell in the
" heart of man. But then the goodneſs of his
" diſpoſition, the humility and meekneſs of his

" nature,

" nature, and the vivacity of his wit was admi-
" rable. He was ſo modeſt, that he could
" hardly be prevailed with to enlarge himſelf on
" ſubjects he underſtood better than other
" men, except he were preſſed by his very fa-
" miliar friends, as if he thought it preſump-
" tion to know more than handſomer men
" uſe to do. Above all, his virtue and piety
" was ſuch, that no temptation could work
" upon him to conſent to any thing that ſwerved
" in the leaſt degree from the preciſe rules of
" honour, or the moſt ſevere rules of conſci-
" ence." Life of Clarendon, Vol. III.

Thus far the noble hiſtorian, who in the laſt feature of the character ſeems to have drawn, by anticipation, the Cavendiſhes of our days; whoſe inflexible integrity and patriotiſm appear in the Britiſh ſenate; and whoſe hereditary virtues are worthy of the houſe of Cavendiſh, and of the former age.

ESSAY

ESSAY X.

OF MAN, AS THE ARBITER OF HIS OWN FORTUNE.

NATURAL and moral ills are eſſential to our ſyſtem. It is in vain to enquire into their origin. An exemption from the former would imply phyſical independence; an exemption from the latter, all moral perfection. Such attributes are divine. Yet man is neither chained down by neceſſity, nor impelled by fate. And reſignation to the unalterable order of things, a ſentiment ſo becoming his condition, ought not to arreſt the hand of induſtry, or to contract the ſphere of active enterprize. After all the efforts he can boaſt, after exhauſting

the

the accumulated exertions of ages, there remains, and will remain, abundant ſcope for all the paſſive virtues in the life of man. Let him then ſuſtain with dignity the weight of his condition; yet not meanly acquieſce in grievances within his province to redreſs.

The action of the elements on his frame is not more conſpicuous, than his reciprocal action on thoſe very elements which are permitted to annoy his being. He has a range allowed him in the creation peculiar to himſelf alone; and he ſeems to have had delegated to him a certain portion of the government of the natural world. Revolutions, indeed, are brought about in various regions by the univerſal laws of motion, uncontrouled, and uncontroulable by any human power. But, under certain limitations, ſoil and climate are ſubject to his dominion; and the natural hiſtory of the

terraqueous

terraqueous globe varies with the civil hiſtory of nations.

In the deſcriptions of antient and modern Europe, the ſame countries appear to be eſſentially different. The climates beyond the Atlantic are altered ſince the days of Columbus. But ſuch differences and alterations are more rightly imputed to the conduct and operations of men, than to any mutability in the courſe of nature. Nor are ſuch alterations confined to thoſe ſettlements on which the additional culture has been beſtowed. The arts of tillage and agriculture have a more diffuſive and general effect. The country of Italy, though not better cultivated than in the days of the Romans, has undergone ſince thoſe days a viciſſitude of temperature, which has ariſen, in all probability, from the more improved ſtate of Germany and France.

The temperature of climates throughout America, ſo different from that which predominates under the ſame parallels of latitude in the antient world, is not entirely to be aſcribed to fixed and permanent cauſes, but rather to the more recent exiſtence of nations in the new hemiſphere, and the inferior cultivation it has conſequently received from the hand of man. Thus much is certain: by opening the ſoil, by clearing the foreſts, by cutting out paſſages for the ſtagnant waters, the new hemiſphere becomes auſpicious, like the old, for the growth and population of mankind.

"Let us learn then to wage war with the elements, not with our own kind; to recover, if one may ſay ſo, our patrimony from Chaos, and not to add to his empire.

The hiſtory of the colonies, and commercial eſtabliſhments of the European nations,

tions, teſtifies that, in almoſt every corner, a healthful and ſalubrious climate is the ſure effect of perſevering and well-conducted labour. Nor is the oppoſite effect chargeable merely on the neglect of culture, and the atmoſphere that overhangs the deſert alone malignant. The malignancy is often directly chargeable on manners, on police, and on civil eſtabliſhments. In ſome of the moſt malignant climates on the Guinea coaſt, the impure habits of the natives have been aſſigned as the efficient cauſe. The exhalations of a negro village, negroes only can endure.

"The plague, ſays Dr. Chandler in his "Travels into the Eaſt, might be wholly "averted from theſe countries, or at leaſt "prevented from ſpreading, if lazarettos "were erected, and ſalutary regulations "enforced, as in ſome cities of Europe. "Smyrna would be affected as little per-

" haps as Marſeilles, if the police were as " well modelled. But this is the wiſdom " of a ſenſible and enlightened people."

A ſpecies of neceſſity, however, in ſome countries conducts mankind to certain decorums in life and manners, which wait, in other countries, the ages of taſte and refinement. The Dutch certainly are not the moſt polite among the European nations; yet the nature of their civil ſettlement, as if anticipating the dictates of refinement, introduced among them from the beginning, a degree of order in their police, and of cleanlineſs in their houſehold œconomy, not ſurpaſſed, perhaps unequalled, by any other people. On a principle of health, an attention to cleanlineſs is more or leſs incumbent on all communities. It preſents an emblem of inward purity, and is dignified, perhaps not improperly, in ſome ſyſtems of ethics, with the appellation of a moral virtue. But with

all

all imaginable precaution on this ſcore, the confluence of numbers in a crowded ſcene is generally productive of diſeaſe. Hence peſtilential diſtempers are ſo often bred in the camp, and uſually march in the train of war. And hence the eſtabliſhment of great cities, under the beſt regulated police, can be demonſtrated, from the bills of mortality, to be deſtructive in a high degree of population and public health*. But all theſe examples relate to artificial, not to natural climate; and there ſeems to be little ground, in the hiſtory of the terraqueous globe, to aſſociate with any fixed and immutable conſtitution of the atmoſphere, the happineſs or perfections of the human ſpecies [A]. Yet local prejudices every where abound: the moſt accompliſhed citizens in nations and ages the moſt accompliſhed, have not been exempted from their ſway.

* See Dr. Price's Obſervations on Reverſionary Payments.

Plato returned thanks to the immortal Gods that he was an Athenian, not a Theban born; that he breathed on the ſouthern, not on the northern ſide of the Aſopus. But if Athens was eminent for refinement, there were other cauſes than the climate. And, if the Bœotians were dull to a proverb, it was a temporary calamity, and Pindar, and Pelopidas, and Epaminondas ſhall vindicate the ſoil. Thus much we may with certainty affirm, that ſoil and climate, if not altogether foreign to the mind, are, like the mind, ſuſceptible of improvement, and variable, in a high degree, with the progreſs of civil arts. Settlements abandoned by one colony, have been repeopled with ſucceſs by another. Projects thought deſperate in days of ignorance, have been reſumed and conducted to a proſperous iſſue in more enlightened times. Individuals have often failed in their attempts, for want of public encouragement.

Public enterprizes have failed for want of concurrence among nations. Eſtabliſh then concert and union among mankind; all regions become habitable, and the elements almoſt ceaſe to rebel.

Nor is this command over the elements the only effect of progreſſive induſtry and labour. The changes introduced into clothing, ſubſiſtence, modes of life, preſent conſiderations of equal moment. In conſequence of theſe changes, our animal ſituation is as fluctuating as our moral; and the ſame people, in the ages of rudeneſs and civility, will retain fewer marks of reſemblance in their organical ſtructure, than will be found among the moſt diſtant nations when contemplated in correſponding points of their progreſs. A people emerged above the wilder ſtates, who ſubſiſt by the culture of the ſoil, not by its ſpontaneous proviſion; who farther ſuperadd the

uſe of foreign commodities to the domeſtic articles of conſumption, have undergone tranſitions, gradual perhaps and inſenſible, but which have affected their whole animal œconomy. Thus the commercial arts, by concentring in one corner of the world the divided treaſures of the earth, confound the primeval diſtribution and arrangement of things, and diverſify in the ſame climate the condition of tribes and nations. There ſeems to be a certain regimen of life ſuited to the local circumſtances of mankind, which is ſuggeſted to them at firſt by inſtinct, or is the ſlow reſult of experience. A different regimen, recommended in a ſimilar manner, is beſt adapted to their circumſtances in another region; and ſudden or injudicious alterations in the modes of life are among the fatal conſequences that attend the commerce of nations. The transference too of epidemical diſtemper from region to region is another conſe-

quence

quence of that commerce no leſs deſtructive. Diſtempers, local in their origin, being thus diffuſed over the globe, become, when tranſplanted, more formidable than in their native ſeats. The plague, ſo deſolating when it invades Europe, commits not equal havoc in the eaſt. The malady, imported by Columbus, was leſs virulent in the American climates. On the other hand, the ſmall-pox, introduced into thoſe climates by the Europeans, threatened the depopulation of the new hemiſphere.

Time, however, which corrects the effects of migrations, ſeems alſo to correct the virulence of tranſplanted diſtemper. Either the human conſtitution oppoſes it with new vigour, or the art of medicine combats it with more ſucceſs; or the poiſon, by being long blended with the ſurrounding elements, ceaſes to be ſo deſtructive. It may [illegible] that ſome diſorders leave impreſſions

impreſſions in the conſtitution which prevent in future the poſſibility of ſimilar annoyance. Hence the expediency of inoculation, a practice firſt introduced into Europe from the eaſt, which ſolicits diſeaſe through a ſafer channel, as a preſervative againſt its eventual attack in all the circumſtances of its natural malignity. But to return from this digreſſion, let us ſurvey the farther tendency of the commercial arts.

The natural productions of one corner ſupply the demands of luxury in another, and the moſt diſtant tribes may approximate each other in their animal temperament by mutual traffic. Even the natives of the moſt penurious ſoil may exchange the rude ſimplicity of their anceſtors for the extravagance of the moſt pampered nations. As national affluence, however, is not diſtributed equally among the ſeveral members of the community (for under an equal di-

viſion

viſion of property no government can long ſubſiſt) we often obſerve at once, in the diſtinction of ranks, ſuch effects of various temperament as ariſe in ſucceſſion to the public from the general viciſſitudes of ſociety. Penury and wealth, ſimplicity and prodigality, indolence and toil, create conſtitutional diſtinctions among the different orders of citizens. For the impreſſion of the commercial arts is often conſpicuous in the upper departments of life, before it reaches thoſe of inferior condition; but the circle gradually widens. The excluſive poſſeſſion of opulence cannot be long maintained; and the fluctuation, ſo natural to commercial ſtates, muſt diſſeminate the effects over the public at large.

In the laſt period of the Roman government, the different provinces of the empire became contaminated with the luxury of the eaſt, whoſe influence on the bodily

temperament

temperament may have contributed, along with moral and political diſtemper, to the ſucceſs of the northern armies.

-Sævior armis
Luxuria incubuit, victumque ulciſcitur orbem.

But theſe ſymptoms of decay, which ſpread at laſt over the provinces, and tainted the maſs of the people, had originated among the nobles, and in the ſeat of government. It was the legions, not the ſenate, the provincials, not the Romans, who acted, during ſeveral generations, as the maſters of mankind. Aurelian, and Probus, and Dioclesian, the reſtorers of the Roman world, were not of Roman blood. And Rome, more debauched than the diſtant provinces, had ſeen ſome of them, ages before her fall, erected into diſtinct and independent ſtates, no longer acknowledging her ſovereign authority, or the laws of the empire.

Such

Such conſequences, however, imply no imputation on the arts of civil life. The food, the raiment, the occupations of the poliſhed citizen may be as innocent as thoſe of the ſavage. The latter is even guilty of exceſſes which diſappear in the age of refinement. The immoderate uſe of intoxicating liquors is generally moſt predominant in the ruder forms of ſociety. It is relinquiſhed in the progreſs of refinement, and ſeems to be ſcarce compatible with the elegant luxuries of a highly cultivated people.

A propenſity indeed to vicious exceſs may be accidentally combined in the ſame character with a high reliſh for the luxuries of life. But the paſſions themſelves are totally diſtinct. A proneneſs to luxury, with an averſion to all riot or exceſs, is no uncommon character; and a proneneſs to exceſs, with an averſion to luxury, though more

more rare, is by no means without example.

A ſtriking example occurs in the character of the famous Iriſh rebel, who, in the reign of Elizabeth, aſſumed the rank and appellation of King of Ulſter. "He was a man, "ſays the hiſtorian, equally noted for his "pride, his violence, his debaucheries, and "his hatred of the Engliſh nation. He is "ſaid to have put ſome of his followers to "death, becauſe they endeavoured to in-"troduce the uſe of bread after the Engliſh "faſhion. Though ſo violent an enemy "to luxury, he was extremely addicted to "riot, and was accuſtomed, after his in-"temperance had thrown him into a fever, "to plunge his body into mire, that he "might allay the flame which he had "raiſed by former exceſſes *.

* Hiſtory of England, vol. v. p. 399.

Luxury,

Luxury, according to its ſpecies and direction, may be pronounced to be either ſalutary or deſtructive. By its connexion with induſtry and active exertion, it is productive of the nobleſt effects. It is the parent of ingenious arts, and conducts a people to honour and diſtinction. Yet objects which are not only innocent, but beneficial in the purſuit, may prove dangerous in the poſſeſſion; and the acquiſitions of national virtue may become the occaſion of its fall. Habits there ſurely are, incident to different periods of ſociety, which tend to enervate the body, and to vitiate the blood. The mechanical ſprings of life reſt not on the energy of one cauſe, but on the combination of many, poſſeſſing often oppoſite and qualifying powers. It were improper therefore to expatiate on the intenſity of one principle, without attending to others which ſerve to heighten or to mitigate its force. One writer magnifies the power of climate; another,

another, the effects of aliment; a third, the efficacy of labour or reſt, and the peculiar influence of certain modes of life. But theſe circumſtances are relative to each other, and it is the reſult of the combination with which we are alone concerned. It was well anſwered by the Spartan to the King of Syracuſe, who found fault with the coarſeneſs of the Spartan fare, "In order, "ſays he, to make theſe victuals reliſh, it "is neceſſary to bathe in the Eurotas."

By the progreſs of agriculture and rural œconomy in our climates, that mode of ſubſiſtence has become the moſt eaſy, which was formerly the moſt difficult. And it were well perhaps for mankind, in moſt countries of Europe at this day, if the great and opulent exchanged with thoſe of inferior condition many of the daily articles of conſumption. Vegetable aliment ſeems to be better adapted to the more indolent claſs of citizens.

citizens. The labouring part of ſociety require a larger proportion of animal food. But it is often difficult for the meaner ſort to procure for themſelves ſuitable ſubſiſtence, and more difficult for their ſuperiors to abſtain from improper gratifications.

If I were not Alexander, ſaid the Prince of Macedon, I would chuſe to be Diogenes. Yet the generality of people would rather imitate the conduct of Ariſtippus, who, for the pageantry of a court, and the pleaſures of a luxurious table, could forego independence, and deſcend from the dignity of philoſophy to the adulation of Kings [B]. The conduct however of mankind, in uncorrupted times, was more conformable to nature; and their reaſon taught them to form ſuch habits and combinations as were moſt congruous with their external condition. Different ſyſtems of policy grow out of theſe combinations; and uſages and

laws relative to climate make a capital figure in antient legiſlation. Even ſuperſtition, on ſome occaſions, has proved a guardian of public manners, and a uſeful auxiliary to legiſlative power. Abſtinence from the fleſh of animals, abſtinence from wine, frequent purifications, and other external obſervances among the Indians, the Perſians, the Arabians, how abſurd ſoever if transferred to other countries, formed on the occaſions, and in the countries where they were inſtituted, important branches of political œconomy. The Egyptians preſcribed by law a regimen for their Kings. In ſome inſtances, certain rules of proportion were eſtabliſhed; and ſuitable to the different claſſes of citizens, there was a ſpecial allotment of aliment preſcribed by the religion of Brama. The Chriſtian diſpenſation alone, divine in its origin, and deſigned to be univerſal, deſcends not to local inſtitutions; but, leaving the details of policy to the rulers of

nations, inculcates only thoſe pure and eſſential doctrines, which are adapted to all climates and governments. Yet the *Vedam*, the *Shaſter*, the *Koran*, and other antient codes, which afford, in one view, ſo ſtriking examples of credulity and fanaticiſm, may be regarded, in another, as monuments of human ſagacity. Happy had it been for the world, if the founders of religion and government had ſeparated, in ſuch caſes, the pure gold from the droſs, and connived only at illuſions connected with public felicity. It were often happy for rude tribes, if they were taught a local ſuperſtition, how abſurd ſoever in its details, that tended to preſerve the ſimplicity of their morals, and debarred them in many inſtances from adopting foreign cuſtoms and manners. How fortunate would it have been for the Indian tribes, throughout the continent of North America, if they had been debarred by the ſolemn ſanc-

tions of a religion, as abſurd as that of Mahomet, from the uſe of intoxicating liquors! a practice derived to them from European commerce, and which contributes, in the new hemiſphere, more, perhaps, than any other cauſe, to the deſtruction, and what is worſe, to the debaſement of the ſpecies.

Our voyages of diſcovery, which in ſome reſpects are ſo honourable, and calculated for noble ends, have never yet been happy for any of the tribes of mankind viſited by us. The vices of Europe have already contaminated the Otaheitean blood. Whether the Engliſh or French navigators have been the firſt authors of the dreadful calamity which now afflicts that race, it is of little importance to decide. While ſo odious a charge is retorted on each other by thoſe nations, the natives of the happy iſland, ſo cruelly abuſed, will have

cauſe

cauſe to lament for ages, that any European veſſel ever touched their ſhores.

Felix, heu nimium felix! ſi littora tantum ———

Moral depravity is a fertile ſource of phyſical ills to individuals, to families, and to nations. Nor are the ills inherent only in the race which bred the diſorder. They ſpread from race to race, and are often entailed, in all their malignity, on poſterity. Thus hereditary diſtemper has a foundation in the natural, as in the moral world. Nor does this reflect upon eternal juſtice, or breed confuſion in the univerſe, or derogate from the ſum of its perfections. If we are puniſhed for the vices, we are rewarded too for the virtues of our fathers. Theſe oppoſite principles of exaltation and debaſement tend to the equilibrium of the ſyſtem. They ſerve alſo to a farther end; they ſerve to draw cloſer the tie

of humanity, to remind us of our duty, by reminding us of the relations of our being, and of thoſe indiſſoluble connexions and dependencies which unite us with the paſt, and will unite us with all ſucceeding ages.

NOTES.

NOTE [*A*], p. 341.

OF the efficacy of ſound regimen in preſerving health, under all the variety of climate to which mankind are apt to be expoſed, there occcurs a memorable example in the late voyage round the world by Capt. Cook, ſo juſtly repreſented to the Royal Society, by his elegant and learned encomiaſt. That navigator, whoſe melancholy fate is, at the moment I am writing, lamented by all Europe, "with a company of "118 men, performed a voyage of three years "and eighteen days, throughout all the climates "from 52° north to 71° ſouth latitude, with "the loſs of a ſingle man only by diſeaſe:" a proportion ſo moderate, that the bills of mortality, in no climate or condition of ſociety, can furniſh ſuch another example.

NOTE [*B*], p. 353.

HORACE, indeed, in the ſpirit of the courtier, the poet, and the man of pleaſure, approves the temporizing ſyſtem of Ariſtippus,

tippus, rather than the auſtere rigour of Diogenes. The pedantry of the latter was ſurely exceſſive. But it was the exceſs of that free, manly, and independent ſpirit, which is allied to true glory, and formed the heroiſm of antiquity.

> Si pranderet olus patienter, regibus uti
> Nollet Ariſtippus;

was the judgment of the cynic; and the reply of Ariſtippus is rather ſmart than ſolid:

> ——— Si ſciret regibus uti,
> Faſtidiret olus, qui me notat. ———
>
> Hor. l. i. ep. 17.

ESSAY XI.

OF FASHIONS THAT PREDOMINATE AMONG VARIOUS TRIBES OF MANKIND.

THE magnitude of external annoyance being variable with the maxims of political œconomy, and the rules of civil life, it is the prerogative of every people to hold the balance of good and evil, and to raise or to depress the scale of their own felicity. To the abuse of this prerogative, not to any unalterable constitution of things, may be ascribed whatever is most wretched or humiliating in the condition of human society. Absurdities of various description in artificial manners, are often destructive of health and vigour, and even tend to divest the natural

natural form of its ſymmetry and perfection.

The cuſtom of painting the body with ſuch rude materials as the ſavage life affords, is a practice which, in the infancy of ſociety, appears to have been almoſt univerſal. It is reſorted to at firſt as an obvious preſervative againſt the inclemency of the ſeaſons, the impreſſions of the ſun, moleſtation from inſects, or other external annoyance. But this invention, like every other, was ſuſceptible of refinement. No longer adjuſted to the ſtandard of conveniency alone, it became ſubject to the caprice and viciſſitude of faſhion; and the embelliſhment of the outward perſon, which was at firſt little attended to, or regarded as a collateral conſideration, came in time to be the principal object. Such fantaſtical decorations are worn as enſigns of dignity, and ſerve as ſo many badges of diſtinc-

diſtinction among ſavage tribes. This invention may be traced up to remote antiquity in the cuſtoms of the European nations. It was reduced to an art among the antient Britons; and the Caledonians, the moſt antient inhabitants of the Northern parts of the iſland, were, from their being peculiarly addicted to this art, denominated *Picts* by the Romans. Not content with ſuch repreſentations as were practicable by the colouring of paint alone, without detriment to the perſon, thoſe rude nations often inſcribed their deſigns with a weightier hand, and by actual inciſions into the body rendered the impreſſions indelible. Thus a practice, at firſt innocent, or ſalutary, became, by degrees, pernicious; and while it aimed at farther decoration, or at emblematical expreſſion, tended in reality to deform the ſpecies.

By the progreſs of ſociety, ſuch faſhions have long ſince diſappeared in Europe. But,

But, if we ſurvey the condition of rude nations in various corners of the world, we find the human frame degraded by cuſtoms ſtill more violent and unnatural. Nor is it in the option of individuals to embrace, or to reſiſt ſuch cuſtoms. The violence is frequently, by the impoſition of parents, rendered almoſt coeval with exiſtence. The body, in its infant ſtate, more pliant and ductile, is more eaſily diveſted of its juſt proportions, and the limbs and members are then capable of being moulded into a variety of unnatural and artificial forms, impracticable in maturer years. If diſtortions, then, of feature and perſon, are thus early introduced, more ſerious and extenſive conſequences may poſſibly ariſe from the ſame ſource.

When the violence is directed, as among the Chineſe and ſome other nations, to the extremities of the body, ſituated at a diſtance from the principal organ of ſenſation,

the

the effect on the animal œconomy is more ſuppoſtable, and the vitals of the conſtitution probably elude the injury; but, unfortunately, the impreſſion is often made where the conſtitution is moſt vulnerable, and the more ſenſible parts ſuſtain a ſhock annoying to the whole nervous ſyſtem. Among one people, to flatten the dimenſions of the head; among another, to render it more convex, parents have recourſe to the moſt ſhocking expedients of art, and the natural guardians of infancy become its chief tormentors. The names by which certain Indian tribes in North America have been diſtinguiſhed, are expreſſive of ſuch unnatural characteriſtics. The Caraibbes of the Weſt Indies, by contrivances and applications of art nearly ſimilar, have acquired a caſt of phyſiognomy altogether peculiar. The Indians of Aſia are not entirely exempted from the ſame odious abuſes; but the principal ſeat of the enormity

mity is certain regions of Africa, where the art of disfiguring the human perſon is, if I may ſay ſo, almoſt the only art which has made ſuch progreſs among the rude inhabitants, as to mark their departure from a ſtate of nature.

In ſuch deplorable faſhions, which ſtifle the voice of nature, the ſufferers, and the authors of the ſufferings, almoſt equally claim commiſeration. But, to diſtort the natural form with an avowed purpoſe of deranging the intellectuals of man, is a conduct ſo flagitious and enormous as has never ſtained the manners of ſavage and untutored tribes; yet, not many ages ago, even this enormity exiſted in the manners of Europe, where, in various inſtances, the forming fools for the entertainment of the great, was the ultimate end propoſed in mutilating the human figure.

The

The recital of ſuch examples fills humanity with horror; and the poſſibility of their exiſtence would hardly be admitted in a cultivated period, did not hiſtory eſtabliſh the facts upon inconteſtible authority, and number them among the corruptions which are found in ſo many ſocieties of men, to degrade the dignity of our ſpecies.

There is a variety of other cuſtoms among rude tribes, which take their riſe from the illuſions of imagination. In obſerving the gradations of colour among the races of mankind, our ideas of beauty are often entirely governed, or greatly influenced, by a regard to the moſt general form of nature we are accuſtomed to contemplate. Among a nation of Blacks, the White; among a nation of Whites, the Black was never the approved complexion. The Hottentots, an ambiguous race, equally allied to either extreme, are at pains to deepen the

ſhade

ſhade of black, as if to maintain a conformity with the prevailing complexion of Africa. On the other hand, the Moors of Barbary, the counterpart of the Hottentots in the northern hemiſphere, who poſſeſs, like them, the medium of complexion, diſcover little predilection for either extreme, which is owing probably to an almoſt equal correſpondence with African and European nations. Upon the ſame principle, the copper colour of the Americans is regarded among them as a criterion of beauty; and it ſeems to be the object of art, by painting the face with vermilion, to maintain, in all its perfection, the predominant complexion of the Indian race. Even the univerſal principles of taſte, when not duly regulated, may lead to egregious abuſe. Unequal degrees of beauty, of elegance, and of ſtrength, enter into the various contexture of the human body; and all attempts are vain to ſuperinduce by violence

lence or art, that perfection which is denied by nature. Conſtitutional blemiſhes or defects may be heightened by too eager a deſire to aboliſh them; and by the violent ſubſtitution of other proportions and lineaments than are conſiſtent with the primeval configuration of the parts, though more conformable, perhaps, to ſome ideal ſtandard of perfection. But ſome of the more flagrant examples of violence done the perſon, to be met with in the cuſtoms of rude tribes, are neither authoriſed nor ſuggeſted by any perception of beauty. They are deſigned, in reality, to create oppoſite emotions, and are dictated by the ferocity of warlike people on purpoſe to confound their enemies by appearances ſcarcely human. The gentler ſex, whoſe conſtant aim is to improve the beauty of the outward form, and who ſubdue mankind only by their charms, even in the African climates, never deviate ſo far from nature. In the

iſland of Biſſao, near to the river Gambia, the matrons are dreſſed in decent attire; and the perſons of the young, though without all ſort of apparel, are not unadorned. The degrees of embelliſhment indicate rank and condition; and the eldeſt daughter of the reigning monarch is diſtinguiſhed from the other ladies of the court by elegance of painting, and the richneſs of her bracelets. But all the happier refinements of fancy are diſregarded in the apparatus of [illegible]

The Giagas, thoſe bloody cannibals of Africa, who are regardleſs of natural as of moral beauty, aſſume the moſt infernal aſpect to render themſelves more formidable to other tribes. The ſame principle authoriſes the abuſe of perſon among various Indian tribes in North America; and authoriſed it, according to the Roman Hiſtorian*,

* Tacit. de Mor. Germ.

among

among a tribe of the antient Germans. But an aſpect ſo tremendous to a foreign enemy, may become venerable among people of the ſame tribe. The dignity of the expreſſion is more conſidered than the deformity of the picture. The beautiful is abſorbed in the ſublime; and the ſpectacle, how odious ſoever in itſelf, is endured as deſcriptive of the degrees of heroiſm and martial valour; virtues chiefly reſpected in a rude age.

Religious fanaticiſm, it may alſo be obſerved, is frequently another ſource of the moſt wretched debaſement. Penances, mortifications, Monkiſh ſeverities, and a number of flagrant obſervances, in the ritual of ſuperſtition, that annoy our frame, have, to the diſgrace of the world, been deemed meritorious in the ſight of Heaven; as if one ſpecies of guilt could be expiated by another; or, as if to deform

and abuſe our nature, could ever be acceptable to the author of all beauty and excellence.

But it is not neceſſary to carry our reſearches anxiouſly into the principles which have concurred to the introduction and eſtabliſhment of ſo many abſurd cuſtoms among mankind. It is ſufficient to obſerve, that the cuſtoms themſelves, from what fountain ſoever they flow, are often attended with conſequences no leſs deſtructive than odious. Thus what ariſes from human folly may become undiſtinguiſhable from the original workmanſhip; or rather, certain diſtinctions, at firſt adventitious, may become the characteriſtics of a tribe, and even be in part tranſmiſſible and hereditary to future generations. The cuſtoms indeed under review belong chiefly to an unpoliſhed ſtate of ſociety; but they are often ſucceeded by others of a tendency ſomewhat

ſomewhat ſimilar. The ſwathing of infants, the confinement of dreſs, and other abſurd practices in our œconomy, unprecedented among barbarians, might be mentioned as counterparts of the ſame violence among poliſhed nations. In general, perhaps, the hardy diſcipline of early times is more auſpicious to health, vigour, and ſymmetry of form, than the more refined culture and ſofter habits of a luxurious age. But without running the parallel of public manners in different periods of civil progreſs, it may be affirmed, that ſome of the groſſer and more heinous abuſes we have here remarked, are irrecoverably deſtructive of the human figure, and perhaps remotely touch the ſprings of our intellectual frame. There being then ſuch a variety of effects, immediately of phyſical production, which can be traced up to a moral original; it is proper to diſtinguiſh and ſeparate that order of ſecond cauſes which is

regulated by the reſolutions and conduct of men, from the independent and immutable influence of external things.

But moral ſentiment, excluſive of its breaking forth into action, by its ſilent and internal movements in the human breaſt, affects, in no ſmall degree, the beauty, health, and perfection of our organized ſyſtem; and this connection of things, though more rarely the object of attention, ought not to be overlooked in explaining the diverſity of appearances in the various tribes of mankind.

ESSAY XII.

OF THE TENDENCY OF MORAL CHARACTER TO DIVERSIFY THE HUMAN FORM.

THE mind itſelf is often the original ſeat of diſorder which is transferred to the animal ſyſtem. In the hiſtory of individuals, it is obvious to obſerve, that a diſtempered imagination, and irregular paſſions, frequently prey upon the body, waſte its vigour, and, even haſten its diſſolution. Judging then from analogy, it ſeems not unreaſonable to expect, that the paſſions, to which ſociety is occaſionally obnoxious, may be productive of ſimilar effects upon the multitude, appear in exterior ſymptoms, impair the

ſoundneſs of public health, and enervate the principle of animal life. What form of ſociety is moſt open to this annoyance, is a problem which, perhaps, the hiſtory of the ſpecies is not able to reſolve. But, in general, it may be pronounced of human life, that the vindictive, the envious, and unſocial paſſions are hoſtile to the poſſeſſor, while all the oppoſite emotions diffuſe a kindlier influence over our animal frame. "How miſerable are the damned! ſaid Saint "Catherine of Genoa; they are no longer "capable of love." So cloſe is the ſocial union, that if the fierceſt tyrant that ever exiſted in human form was doomed to be himſelf the executioner of his bloody edicts, the victims of his tyranny would become the inſtruments of his puniſhment, and the torture inflicted would be more than he could endure. The little tyrant of Greece, whom the Hecuba of Euripides chaſed from the public theatre, all bathed in tears, retained,

in

in defiance of himſelf, the ſenſibility of nature. And if the heart is thus liable to be ſubdued by fiction, how ſhould it ſuſtain, in ſimilar circumſtances, the actual preſence of woe? To be callous to ſuch impreſſions, is to be more or leſs than man; and, even where virtue is extinct, our organized ſyſtem is liable to be affected by this powerful ſympathy of minds.

Varieties of national character we obſerve imprinted on the phyſiognomy of nations. The ſeveral qualities of levity or vanity, dignity or pride, puſillanimity, fortitude, dulneſs, vivacity, ferocity, meekneſs, and a thouſand nicer gradations of moral character, riſe up in the viſage, and mark the exterior of man. Individuals, it is allowed, are often found devoid of the characteriſtics that predominate in the family, in the tribe, or in the nation to which they belong, while they retain, nevertheleſs, all the

the uſual marks of thoſe characteriſtics. Hence, phyſiognomy is a deluſive art; men are beliçd by appearances, till at laſt the genuine expreſſion of the individual is interpreted, and declares the fallacy of more equivocal and general ſigns. Theſe general ſigns, the accumulated effect, perhaps, of prevailing habit for generations, may become congenial to a race; and, being wrought into the organization, cannot be effaced at once by the abſence of the cauſes which contributed to their formation. To correct, and to eſtabliſh mental habit, is the prerogative of a moral agent; but the lineaments and proportions of the body are not variable with the gradations of intellectual improvement; and hence the mind is ſo often at variance with the forms which the countenance aſſumes, in conſequence of its primæval caſt. When the moſt exalted genius of antiquity, by the exertion of this prerogative, had reformed

formed and ennobled all the features of his character, a phyſiognomiſt, by the rules of art, judged of him from his conſtitutional propenſities. Some latitude, however, is allowed to man in this adjuſtment of things. He can often conceal or diſguiſe his ſentiments by the ſuppreſſion of the natural ſign; he can aſſume appearances, without the feelings to which they belong. In the exerciſe of this talent he diſplays conſummate addreſs; and artificial language, more at command, favours the deceit, and countervails the language of nature. Such artifices confer, if I may ſay ſo, a falſe and temporary phyſiognomy, that violates the connection of things, and belies the ſyſtem of the mind. So difficult, however, and laborious, is this effort of art, that the moſt dexterous diſſemblers, aided by all the power of words, often fail in the attempt. A writer, profoundly verſed in the human character, yet more diſpoſed to heighten

its

its blemiſhes than its perfections, has remarked, in one of the greateſt ſtateſmen of his time, this ſtruggle between art and nature. "It is, indeed, true," ſays Dean Swift of my Lord Somers, "that no man is "more apt to take fire upon the leaſt ap- "pearance of provocation, which temper he "ſtrives to ſubdue with the utmoſt violence "upon himſelf; ſo that his breaſt has been "ſeen to heave, and his eyes to ſparkle "with rage, in thoſe very moments when "his words, and the cadence of his voice, "were in the humbleſt and ſofteſt manner. "Perhaps that force upon his nature may "cauſe that inſatiable love of revenge "which his detractors lay to his charge, "who conſequently reckon diſſimulation "among his chief perfections *."

To form falſe combinations is not only difficult, but the execution probably is al-

* Hiſtory of the four laſt Years of the Queen.

ways

ways imperfect; and hence the great maſters in expreſſion, whether orators, or actors on the ſtage, muſt endeavour to feel all the emotions they would diſplay to advantage. That becoming attitude, that arrangement of feature they would aſſume, is found attainable only by the medium of correſponding ſentiment. Thus the connection of things is maintained, and we are not deceived, unleſs by attributing a ſolidity and permanency to ſentiments which have ſo unſubſtantial and periſhing an exiſtence. This illuſion of imagination, practiſed on themſelves, and by which alone they compaſs their ends, may even ſway the moral character. In often perſonating the hero, there is acquired a caſt of heroiſm; and in perſonating mean wretches, there is danger of actual debaſement; for ſentiments find an eaſy ingreſs through the imagination into the heart, and the occaſional ſentiments of the actor may become the habitual principles

ciples of the mani Thus, the profligate or libertine, long acted, abates the love of decorum; and he who can ſuſtain the enthuſiaſm of any virtue, though in a borrowed character, has probably appropriated to himſelf ſome ſhare of its real energy. It is this mode of proceeding which diſcriminates the actor of genius from the inferior mimic, whoſe talents are exhauſted in the tranſcript of viſible ſigns, regardleſs of their foundation in the human mind. In the one caſe, the repreſentation is juſt and natural; in the other, aukward and inanimated; and, by ſuch criterion, a ſagacious obſerver will diſtinguiſh real excellence from mechanical imitation in the fictitious drama, as in the drama of the world, candour from affectation, and the truth of character from diſſimulation and impoſture.

In the interpretation of natural ſigns, there is an obvious diſtinction to be made between

between ſuch as imply immediate feeling, and the more general, which, without reference to the preſent ſtate of the mind, intimate its habitual and predominant temper; as, for inſtance, an occaſional ſtart of good-humour differs from the propenſity which conſtitutes a good-humoured man, ſo differ their reſpective ſigns. But as frequent returns of the emotion declare the propenſity, ſo frequent returns of the correſponding ſign tend ultimately to the eſtabliſhment of a fixed and permanent criterion in the corporeal texture. The particular ſigns, where no artifice is uſed, are never equivocal; and compoſe the firſt elements of language. But, as has been before obſerved, between the general ſigns and the temper a repugnancy may often ſubſiſt. In the one caſe, the evidence is explicit; in the other, it is only preſumptive. The former conſtitution was expedient or neceſſary for the purpoſes of ſocial intercourſe;

courſe; but it was neither neceſſary nor expedient, that the character of the mind ſhould be legible in the countenance, and in the full view of every beholder.

Upon the whole, it may be concluded, that the mental qualities and the correſponding ſigns are not neceſſarily coincident, or the reſult of one phyſical arrangement, but ſtand rather in the relation of cauſe and effect; the latter growing out of the former, in conſequence of thoſe myſterious laws which pervade the ſyſtem of man. Thus moral ſentiment diverſifies the outward form; and though the varieties which indicate national character, may often be equally conſiſtent with health and vigour; yet, in certain circumſtances of ſociety, there is reaſon to believe that the predominant feelings of our nature become highly injurious to the animal œconomy.

Let us ſuppoſe a tribe of mankind reduced to a ſituation the moſt humiliating and calamitous; cramped in their intellectual exertions by an illiberal diſcipline; prone to the ſentiments they muſt learn to diſſemble, and averſe from other ſentiments they are obliged to counterfeit; at perpetual variance with fortune; and led, by the rigour of its perſecutions, to cheriſh the odious, the rancorous, the vindictive, to the excluſion of all the gentler paſſions. Under ſuch circumſtances, it were contrary to the whole analogy of nature, if the bodily conſtitution remained ſound and untouched. Nor is the picture we have drawn copied from imagination, and aſſumed merely on the prerogative of hypotheſis. The original is, perhaps, to be contemplated in the hiſtory of the antient world; among the bondmen of Judea, the helots of Sparta, the ſubjects of domeſtic tyranny among the Romans. The condition

condition of those tribes was indeed sufficiently wretched: yet such as, in some respects, might almost excite envy, when compared with that severer destiny, to which the maxims of modern policy have condemned, in another hemisphere, a large proportion of the species.

Of all the nations of antiquity, the Athenians treated slaves with most humanity; the Spartans, with the least. If, in the treatment of their women, the Spartans have appeared worthy of such superior praise; in this other branch of public manners, they are far inferior to the rival state. The most wanton debasement of slaves entered into the avowed plan of their civil discipline. The helots were even compelled to commit vice, in order to inspire an abhorrence of it in the Spartan youth; to besot themselves with intoxicating liquors, in order to afford a lesson of moderation to the

the free citizen. But how ſhocking is that policy which ſported with humanity in one form, to give it dignity in another; and authoriſed a breach of morality, with a view to enforce its precepts! It is equalled perhaps only by the policy of ſome modern ſtates, who are ſaid to encourage or connive at the corruption of their prieſts, with a view to check the influence which ſuperſtition is apt to give to that order of men over the minds of the people.

The *Cryptia*, or ambuſcade, by which the dark and inſidious murder of the helots was authoriſed by law, caſts a diſmal ſhade on the whole fabric of Spartan juriſprudence. It implies a degree of barbarity to which, it muſt be owned, there is no parallel even in the black code, or in the preſent regulations of any European ſtate. There is, however, ground to believe that ſo ſhocking an inſtitution was ſuggeſted on a general revolt of the ſlaves, by the apprehenſion of

public danger, but disgraced not the system of Lycurgus, nor the purer ages of the Spartan commonwealth. In general, the condition of antient slaves was less unhappy. The *Chronia* of the Greeks, the *Saturnalia* of the Romans, could even invert the distinction of ranks. Slaves, on these festivals, were served by their masters; and all ranks of men were reminded, by an admirable establishment, of that primitive equality which was supposed to have subsisted in the reign of Saturn, and the golden age. Some intervals of freedom were thus permitted; some short respite to the wretched. But the negro tribes are unacquainted with any such indulgences. And, without taxing their American masters with an inhumanity beyond the nations of antiquity, we may observe peculiar circumstances in their destiny that enhance its rigour. Their masters, without being more inhuman by nature, are, in practice, more unjust. Antient

tient ſlaves found a refuge in the ſympathy of their maſters, which the negroes do not ſo eaſily excite. Their features and complexion, regarded as natural badges of inferiority, ſeem to mark them out for ſervitude; and, furniſhing an occaſion for unreaſonable contempt, or antipathy approaching to hatred, extinguiſh that fellow-feeling with their ſufferings, by which their grievances would often be lightened, and the hand of the oppreſſor diſarmed.

Hatred, envy, and revenge grow up naturally under ſuch ſufferings. But the love of liberty, the moſt ſtubborn principle of the heart, is at length eradicated. Self-reverence is gone; and emancipation itſelf cannot reſtore them to the honours of human nature. In time, they view themſelves almoſt in the light in which they are viewed by their rulers; and it is thus they finally acquieſce in their deſtiny, and ceaſe

even to think like free men, after having long ceaſed to be free.

If then the unfortunate natives of Africa, the ſubjects of our diſhonourable and odious commerce, do, in reality, degenerate in the various regions to which they are transferred, and, far from multiplying, cannot even keep up the number of the ſtock without perpetual recruits, it is not improbable that the inſolence of tyranny, and the violence offered to the ſtubborn paſſions and feelings of nature, contribute as largely to that degeneracy in their frame, as the ſmart of the rod, or malignity of climate, or the labours they are forced to endure.

The reduction of the negro tribes to perpetual ſervitude was contended for in the fifteenth century, on this notable ground, "that they had the colour of the damned." This ground can only be occupied in an ignorant

ignorant and ſuperſtitious age. But the arguments, by which the ſame conduct is ſtill attempted to be vindicated, though more ſubtle and refined, are equally repugnant to reaſon, to humanity, and to ſound policy. Thoſe arguments have accordingly been refuted, from all theſe conſiderations, by ſome of the moſt reſpectable writers in our own and other nations; by Hume, by Smith, by Monteſquieu; and, in a manner the moſt deciſive and animated, by an author*, who unites to the warmeſt zeal for the rights of mankind, a comprehenſive knowledge of their intereſts; and who has adorned a work, abounding in various and uſeful information for all nations, with all the lights of philoſophy, and all the ſplendor of eloquence. But the conviction of men of ſcience is not the conviction of the crowd, and has often but little weight

* Hiſt. Phil. et Polit. tome iv. p. 161 et ſuiv.

with the rulers of nations; to whom alone it belongs, by prohibiting the importation of ſlaves under the ſevereſt penalties, to annihilate for ever a traffic which throws ſo great a ſtain on the political œconomy of modern ages.

The late reſolution of the Quakers in Pennſylvania to emancipate their negro ſlaves, ſeems to evidence a degree of pure and diſintereſted virtue in that people, beyond the example of the moſt virtuous communities of antient times.

The love of civil liberty is ſurely a generous paſſion; yet is it capable of being combined with the love of domination: and it may perhaps be affirmed, that the toleration of domeſtic ſlavery, among the Greeks and Romans, tended to inſpire an additional ardour in the cauſe of freedom. The ſeverities inflicted on their ſlaves

heightened

heightened the dread of their own eventual ſufferings. Tyrants at Home, they became more jealous of tyranny in their civil rulers, and even impatient under the controul of legal dominion. They contemplated political through the medium of domeſtic ſervitude, and became in reality more tenacious of civil liberty, by perſiſting in a conduct that rendered them more unworthy of it. Perhaps the ſame cauſe has been productive of ſimilar effects in ſome of the colonies of America. Yet the nobleſt paſſion in the human breaſt is more naturally cheriſhed by the love of juſtice and humanity. And it is reſerved for ſome happier age to aboliſh, throughout the new hemiſphere, an inſtitution, which has polluted the hiſtory of the freeſt governments in the antient world.

In ſome of the Spaniſh provinces, where the negroes are leſs employed in field-work than

than in domeſtic ſervice, their condition is ſomewhat elevated; but it is by the depreſſion of another part of our ſpecies ſtill more wretched. Submiſſion is more or leſs humiliating, from the conſideration of the perſons to whom it is paid. A child is not degraded by ſubmiſſion to a parent; nor a ſubject, by allegiance to his lawful prince. But to be expoſed to the inſults of a race of ſlaves, is the loweſt form of debaſement. Yet ſuch has been the fortune of the native Indians in thoſe very countries where their anceſtors ſuſtained the character of flouriſhing and happy nations. Among the inhabitants of the Spaniſh colonies, they rank below the negroes; who, elevated by this diſtinction, treat them with inſolence and ſcorn. And it is the inſidious policy of the Spaniards, to ſow the ſeeds of diſcord and animoſity between the two races, who will one day perhaps lay aſide their mutual rancour, in order to retaliate their

common.

common miſeries on their imperious maſters.

The American features and complexion, ſcarce leſs offenſive to the Europeans than the African, allowed equal ſcope to their antipathies; while theſe antipathies were heightened and inflamed by the jealouſy entertained of the vanquiſhed. And though the condition of the Indians is improved by the more recent regulations of the Spaniſh policy, had it been poſſible for their anceſtors at the conqueſt to have predicted ſo long a ſeries of calamity, it might well have inſpired, throughout the empires of Peru and Mexico, ſuch a deſperate reſolution, as was actually executed at that æra by an Indian tribe in the iſland of Saint Domingo, who unanimouſly interdicted themſelves the commerce of ſex, that they might not entail their miſeries on a poſterity. Thus the Indians in thoſe regions had

had ſuffered extinction, not degradation: and who would heſitate to prefer the firſt, when ſuch alternatives alone are preſented by fortune?

But the pen drops from my hand, in reciting the enormities acted by Europeans in the new hemiſphere. Nor ſhould I have entered ſo far into the detail, were I not called upon by my ſubject to contemplate life from its higheſt to its loweſt gradation, and to illuſtrate thoſe moral ſituations, which are ſo capable of producing degeneracy in the human frame. And ſuch conſequences may be allowed to follow from the intimate union of mind and body, without favouring thoſe ſyſtems of materialiſm, which, however faſhionable in the philoſophy of the preſent age, ſeem to confound the moſt important diſtinctions of our being. The body, as has been obſerved, may proſper while the mind is debaſed.

baſed. The mind may proſper, while the body loſes of its perfection. Yet the ſhocks which are felt in the tranſition from a free and happy ſtate to that of ſlavery and dejection, may prove, to the laſt degree, injurious to the organization of man. It is not ſo much any debaſement or elevation of the mental powers, that we have ſuppoſed deſtructive, as unnatural reſtraint, as the revolt of the ſpirit, and the intenſity of inward emotion. The limit of this influence over a people, we pretend not to fix with preciſion; yet that the contagion of the mind, in a variety of ways, affects the whole animal œconomy, is eſtabliſhed by the hiſtory of individuals, of tribes, and of nations. And as the condition of a ſlave is by far the moſt wretched in the lot of man, ſo its tendency is apparently the moſt deſtructive. Of this, the hiſtory of the negro tribes furniſhes an immenſe variety of the moſt melancholy

melancholy examples. And it is ſufficiently atteſted, that great numbers of the native Indians of America, when they found they were treated as ſlaves by the Spaniards, have died of vexation, or deſtroyed themſelves in the frenzy of deſpair. Under the rigour then of ſuch diſcipline, we may expect the decline of the animal ſyſtem, if not the total extinction of the degraded race.

But the perfection of the animal is not the perfection of the man; neither do their infirmities neceſſarily correſpond. It is therefore of more importance to enquire how far moral and civil culture affects the ſyſtem of the mind, and thereby creates original and eſſential differences in the temper and genius of poſterity; a queſtion which, promiſing ſome farther openings into the theory of the human character, deſerves to be conſidered in a ſeparate Eſſay.

ESSAY XIII.

OF THE HEREDITARY GENIUS OF NATIONS.

THE empire of the imagination and the paſſions, by diverſifying the natural form, and reaching the organization of man, has appeared to be extenſive. But, without invigorating or enervating the principle of mere animal life, perhaps his genius and character in one age may, by the more direct laws of the intellectual œconomy, affect the original genius and character of ſucceeding generations. The mode of this œconomy we pretend not to unfold. It is the order of things; it is the relation of appearances alone, which is the foundation of all juſt theory with regard to the

the natural or to the moral world. The connection of cauſe and effect is, in all caſes, a myſterious connection, which no mortal can unveil. Prior then to all theory, let us contemplate ſome of the appearances in civil life.

The ſeparation of families and the diſtinction of ranks are eſſential to all political eſtabliſhments. No diviſion of property, no rules of patrimonial ſucceſſion, no ſumptuary, no agrarian laws can long preſerve a parity of rank or fortune among any people. The greater number, indeed, in every ſtate, are rendered ſubſervient to the few; are confounded together in one claſs, and compoſe the rude vulgar of mankind. Thus, in the plan of the Comitia of Rome, the people was diſtributed into ſix claſſes, and every Roman was allowed ſome ſhare of political power; but the loweſt claſs gradually ſunk into neglect.

The whole power of the comitia was transferred to their ſuperiors, and thoſe of *each* claſs, though equal in their collective capacity, were, as men and as citizens, of very unequal conſideration.

Theſeus inſtituted at Athens an order of nobility, and debarred the people at large from all the honourable functions of civil government. And if Solon, by permitting every citizen to vote in the public aſſembly, ſeemed to confer on the meaneſt of them a ſort of political exiſtence; yet, even by Solon's plan, the Athenians were divided into three claſſes, according to the extent of their fortunes, while the maſs of the people, diſtinct from theſe, were legally excluded from all offices of truſt or honour.

In Sparta alone an equality of fortune was the aim of the legiſlator, and an avowed maxim of government. But the expedients

of Lycurgus were not effectual for that purpoſe; and, even in the pureſt ages of the Commonwealth, the diſtinction of riches and poverty was not totally unknown.

Such is the condition of men in the moſt democratical ſtates. The forms of ſociety require ſubordination; the detail of affairs calls for different occupations; and mankind are diſtributed into claſſes, to which belong unequal degrees of importance.

That the ſubdiviſion of arts, which is ſo conducive to their perfection, degrades the character of the common artizan, is a propoſition conſonant to the uniform experience of civilized nations. The moſt ſimple manufacture is executed by the joint labour of a number of people, each of whom being expert only in his own peculiar branch, perceives neither the connection of deſign, nor the reſult of the combination.

bination. That ſyſtematic knowledge belongs only to the maſter-artiſt; and the detail of the execution ſeems to reſemble, in ſome ſort, the proceedings of inſtinct in animal life, where we ſo often obſerve, by the wiſdom of nature, a regular, though blind, co-operation of numbers towards an unknown end.

The manufacture of a pin is a trite example, ſerving well to illuſtrate this ſubdiviſion of labour. That buſineſs is ſubdivided into about eighteen diſtinct operations, which are ſometimes all performed by diſtinct hands. In manufactures of a more complicated fabric, the operations are ſtill farther ſubdivided, and often tend, among the various orders of artizans, to debilitate the body, and to engender diſeaſe. But excluſively of this conſequence, the life of ſuch an artizan is filled up with a ſeries of actions, which, returning with an inſipid

uniformity, affords no exercise to genius or capacity. And, if the tendency of his occupation is not counteracted by some expedient of government, he is suffered to fall into a torpor of intellect, which implies the absence or annihilation of every manly virtue. Such occupations, in the antient republics of Greece and Rome, were considered as beneath the dignity of free citizens, and were commonly exercised by slaves.

In the present state of the arts among the European nations, perhaps the most respectable character among the inferior ranks is bred by the profession of arms. Its functions, which have more compass and variety, are more animated and interesting than those of a mechanical trade. The whole detail of military exercise polishes and fashions the body, and even confers graces which elevate the mind. In the

breast

breaſt of a private ſoldier, accordingly, there often reigns a ſenſe of perſonal dignity and honour, which ſcarce ever enters into the maſs of the people, and is but rarely to be met with in men of ſuperior affluence and figure. A certain caſt of genius and character adheres to every condition. Different degrees of refinement and civility characteriſe the various orders of citizens; and the dignity or meanneſs annexed to the ſphere in which they move, is, by no violent tranſition of imagination, transferred to their immediate, and even to remote deſcendents, and regarded as appendages of poſterity.

Thus families are formed, where men become deſtined, from birth alone, to occupy, in civil ſociety, more or leſs exalted ſtations. Antiquity of family then implies a deſcent from a ſeries of anceſtors long ſeparated from the crowd, and exalted to ſome eminence in the ranks of life. Now,

it will not be denied, that in the firſt generation, the reſemblance of children to parents is often conſpicuous in the features, both of body and mind. The one ſpecies of reſemblance is ſometimes conſpicuous where the other is ſcarce diſcernible; and the other ſpecies is ſometimes no leſs predominant where the former ſubſiſts in an inferior, or perhaps in no degree. Theſe principles, though blended occaſionally in their operations, ſeem to be diſtinct and independent. Various cauſes, to us unknown, may interrupt the law of reſemblance in the outward form. Various cauſes, alike unknown, may interrupt the law of reſemblance in the moral œconomy. Theſe connections and dependencies we attempt not to explore. We know not how far the character of parents touches, if we may ſay ſo, the elements of the amorous paſſion, or diverſifies the mode of inſtinct, ſo as to affect the progeny of phyſical love. It is ſufficient, if general experience declare ſuch

connections

connections to have a foundation in nature.

Admit then, that certain qualities of mind, as well as body, are tranſmiſſible in the firſt generation, and do not terminate there; is there not reaſon to expect, from the accumulated efforts of the ſame cauſes, that ſome general inheritance may be derived in a courſe of ages, and conſequently, that a greater or leſs propenſity to refinement, to civility, and to the politer arts, may be connected with an illuſtrious, or more obſcure original?

But this ſpecies of influence, which is ſtrictly moral, ought to be variable in every country, with the order, the policy, and the arrangements of civil ſociety. It is the genius of popular and free governments to annihilate, in ſome ſort, family diſtinctions. Citizens, born to equal privileges, and con-

ſtituted in ſimilar points of exterior rank, will tranſmit to poſterity more equal proportions of the gifts of nature. Under a more unequal government, where diſtinctions abound, where there reigns the ſtrongeſt contraſt of circumſtances, and where a diſparity of condition has been cheriſhed and preſerved for ages, the moral diverſity will be more conſpicuous; and civil diſtinctions long maintained, will open a ſource of natural diſtinctions in ſucceeding times. Hereditary characteriſtics accordingly attracted the attention of mankind, in ſome degree, under all the antient governments. A regard to deſcent, which amounted to a ſpecies of idolatry among ſome nations, has not been altogether exploded in free and popular ſtates. In the Gentoo government of Indoſtan, the diſtinction of caſts or tribes was never violated by promiſcuous commerce. And ſuch was the public ſollicitude of the Indians, about

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the future generation, that physical education might be said to commence antecedently to birth. A guardian was appointed for an infant yet unborn; and it was his province to lay down a regimen for the mother during the months of pregnancy *.

The improvement of the race of citizens was a favourite object of Spartan policy. And while, with this view, the laws authorised, under certain regulations, a community of wives, and even approved of crossing the brood, they permitted not alliances or intermarriages among the different orders of citizens. Such alliances and intermarriages were also expressly interdicted by the laws of Rome, for upwards of three hundred years. The free spirit of the Romans indeed at last rebelled against such odious distinctions, and opened to every citizen the way to civil honours. Yet the

* Gentoo Code, p. 283.

Romans

Romans themſelves, after ſo glorious a ſtruggle for privilege, againſt the uſurpations of a proud nobility, teſtified, in the very moment of victory, their reverence for Patrician blood*. Imagination ſurely, in all ſuch caſes, influences the judgment of the people; and while it inclines them ſo often to beſtow unmerited preference, it ſometimes elevates the character of the individuals to whom that preference is given. Men nobly born are animated with the idea, and think themſelves called upon, in a peculiar manner, to emulate the virtues, and to ſuſtain the honours of their name.

Et Pater Anchiſes, & avunculus excitat Hector.

They feel, not what they are, but what they ought to be; till at laſt, by feeling what they ought to be, they become what they were not: and thus by reverencing

* Tit. Liv. cap. 6, lib. iv.

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the dignity of anceſtors, they learn to aſſert their own. But, independently of ſuch ſentiments, as well as of all the peculiar incentives to true glory, there is often an inviſible preparation of natural cauſes, which concurs with the civil order of things in prolonging the honours or even the infamy of a race; and hereditary characteriſtics are interwoven into the genius and eſſence of the mind. Hence the milder glories of the *Valerii*; hence the unfeeling obſtinacy and inſolence of the *Appian* blood. And, perhaps, it will be found that the judgment of the crowd, in theſe, as in many inſtances, though ſwayed by imagination, has however a foundation in experience, and is, in part, conformable to general laws.

To vindicate the principle on which this judgment proceeds, let us review the condition of a family emerging from rudeneſs into the dignity of civil life.

life. Let us ſuppoſe the founders conſtituted in a ſtate of independence, and of decent affluence; graced with every circumſtance that can command reſpect; improved by all the advantages of moral and of civil culture, and exalted to a mode of thinking, and of acting, ſuperior to vulgar minds. Some traces of this ſpirit, we may affirm, without being charged with exceſſive refinement, are likely to adhere to their immediate progeny. But, how ſcanty or latent ſoever this inheritance at firſt, if the cauſes are not diſcontinued, the conſtitutional effect will be more conſpicuous in the ſecond generation. If the former impreſſions are not effaced, the third generation will have their conſtitution more ſtrongly impregnated with the ſame elements; till at laſt, by happy alliances, and by preſerving the line on one ſide long unbroken, there ſhall reſult an aſſociation of qualities, which, being conſolidated into the conſtitution, form the

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characteriſtics of a race. The ſame reaſoning is eaſily transferred to a family of an ignoble line. Inſtead of competence, independence, culture, ſubſtitute indigence, ſervility, rudeneſs. Extend this allotment over an equal ſeries of poſterity, and you will probably reverſe all the propenſities of nature. A thouſand circumſtances indeed may warp a conſtitution from any line of character, and be deſtructive of all hereditary ſymptoms; but if theſe ſymptoms are often found to be concomitants of birth, and are viſible in the extremes, they will ſubſiſt, though leſs apparently, in other ſituations; and our reaſoning, how fallacious ſoever, if applied to individuals, juſtifies the general concluſion. If that turn of imagination, thoſe infirmities of intellect, which mark inſanity, or delirium, or folly, are ſo often confeſſed hereditary, ſhall we not allow to all the noble endowments and talents of the mind, the ſame

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prerogative? But there is no need to infer from analogy what might be eſtabliſhed by the moſt copious induction, were it not tedious to enumerate particulars, where the experience of common life is ſo deciſive. Theſe communicable qualities are ſubject to many contingencies: ſome are obliterated; others, checked in their growth, lie dormant for generations, yet again revive: it is only an aſſemblage of great talents, or the long predominance of ſome one ſtriking quality, that attracts the obſervation of the world. The great qualities of the laſt Athenian king flouriſhed in the *Archons* for above three hundred years. The *Incas* of Peru, during a far longer period, were eminent for every princely virtue. The daughter of *Scipio* was mother of the *Gracchi*. The heroiſm of the younger *Brutus* was the heroiſm of his remote progenitor. The houſes of the *Publicolæ*, the *Meſſalæ*,

and *Valerii*, were illuſtrious for ſix hundred years. The *Decii*, retaining, equally long, their primeval character, attempted the revival of Roman virtue in the decline of the empire. And, if expectation might be raiſed upon ſuch foundations, a Briton might almoſt anticipate ſome of the actors on the public ſtage at ſome future æra. We have ſeen a patron of freedom in our days, inferior to no Roman name, commanding the applauſe of ſenates, ſuſtaining the vigour of public councils, and leading on a nation to glory. We have ſeen another, of congenial ſpirit, preſiding in the aſſembly of the nobles, and diſpenſing, from the higheſt tribunal, juſtice to the people;

—— His dantem Jura Catonem.

I dare not mention a name among the living—but that the moſt illuſtrious ſtateſman of the preſent age has left poſterity, is matter of generous ſatisfaction to the Engliſh nation.

Yet

Yet we are far from conſidering birth as the criterion of any one perfection of the mind or body. Neither do we ſuppoſe, in general, that an exalted ſtation calls forth the greateſt talents, or is moſt favourable to the growth, or communication of moral or intellectual endowments. Thoſe in the middle ranks of life, in a flouriſhing and cultivated nation, promiſe to tranſmit as fair an inheritance to poſterity. The acceſs to refinement, to culture, and to civil honours, which is opened to them in the progreſs of government, allows them almoſt every advantage; while they are often exempted from corruptions which are foſtered by ſuperior rank. Without drawing invidious parallels, it may be affirmed, that the fluctuation of things, in our age and country, the rotation of employments, the mutual intercourſes, intermarriages, and alliances, ſo often formed, are ſufficient to blend and unite different tempers

tempers and capacities, ſo as to prevent hereditary endowments from becoming characteriſtical of any one order of citizens. Yet the ſame cauſes, whoſe influence in particular families is ſtill ſufficient to draw attention, might, in other circumſtances of ſociety, have affected the departments of civil life, and the more general diviſions of mankind. In ancient times, when profeſſions were hereditary; when intermarriages among different claſſes were not permitted, or were held diſhonourable; when conjugal love was rarely violated, and genealogy was a faſhionable ſcience; hereditary talents would be more obſervable, and their influence in ſociety more ſtrongly defined. Upon the whole, it muſt be admitted, that the character of anceſtors has influence on the line of poſterity; and that a long ſeries of cauſes, antecedent to birth, has affected, in each individual, not only the mechanical and

vital ſprings, but, in ſome degree alſo, the conſtitutional arrangements of his intellectual nature. The circumſtance therefore of birth alone, may be regarded as more or leſs auſpicious; and may be allowed, on ſome occaſions, to heighten or to depreſs expectation; but cannot, without palpable and egregious abſurdity, enter farther into the account, or be rendered a topic of exultation or reproach in the eſtimation of perſonal merit. Iphicrates, an upſtart Athenian, replied with becoming ſpirit to a perſon of noble birth, who had dared to arraign his pedigree, "The honours of my family begin with myſelf: "the honours of yours end in you." How often might thoſe in a humble ſphere, exchange places with men who ſit in the cabinet of kings? how often, as in the Roman government, might we call a Dictator from the plough? The diſtinction here opened, far from flattering the arro-

gance,

gance, or juſtifying the uſurpations of men, if extended from individuals, and families, to the larger aſſociations of mankind, will help to explain the hiſtory of the world with the leaſt poſſible violence to the common prerogatives of the ſpecies.

A cultivated and poliſhed nation may, in ſome reſpects, be regarded as a ſtanding family. The one is, relatively to the greater number of the communities of mankind, what the other is, relatively to the greater number of citizens under the ſame civil œconomy. The conduct of the one, and of the other, towards their ſuppoſed inferiors, is often exactly ſimilar. Both carry themſelves with equal inſolence, and ſeem alike to forget or to deny the inherent and unalienable rights of the ſpecies. Nations, however, as well as families, may have ſome inheritance to boaſt; and the progeny of ſavages or bar-

barians may be diſtinguiſhable, both in outward and inward form, from the progeny of a cultivated people. A long ſeries of civilization may exalt and refine certain principles congenial to our frame. A long ſeries of ages ſpent in rudeneſs or barbarity, may blunt and disfigure, though it can never obliterate, in any tribe, the great outlines of human nature. While one ſeries of cauſes tends more effectually to the perfection of the animal powers, another ſeries may prove more auſpicious to ſome parts of the intellectual œconomy. Many ſavage tribes are remarkable for abilities in one line, while no leſs deficient in another. Some diſcover ſingular, and almoſt incredible propenſities to manners approaching to brutality. The indocility of others is perfectly aſtoniſhing. And in general, as if reluctant to diveſt themſelves of the habits of their anceſtors, they ſhew an unfitneſs to receive the graces and refinements of poliſhed life.

life. Such appearances are aſcribed by ſome writers to a fixed and immutable diverſity in the races of mankind; and the regions that by accident have been the ſcene of rudeneſs and barbarity, are pointed out as the permanent and natural habitations of inferior mortals. But theſe innate and conſtitutional differences have been ſhewn, in the preceding pages, to be fluctuating and contingent; and therefore conſiſtent with parity of rank, and one common origin of nations.

Allow to the moſt unpromiſing tribes ſuch advantages in the political ſcene, as belong occaſionally to the rudeſt vulgar, under any civil eſtabliſhment; and as the latter emerge into dignity among their fellow-citizens, ſo ſhall the former among the ſociety of nations. The inheritances of all the families within a ſtate, reckoning from its firſt foundation, are, perhaps, nearly ba-

lanced in the revolution of the great year of government. The inheritances of tribes and nations in all countries of the globe, may be alſo balanced in the revolution of that greater year which completes the deſtiny of man.

Illuſtrious rank is no more to be regarded as a criterion of perfection in forming the general eſtimate of nations, than in forming the particular eſtimate of the ſeveral families or members of the ſame community. The greateſt nation is not always bleſſed with the moſt equal government, nor adorned with the moſt accompliſhed citizens. The collective wiſdom of a people is not to be eſtimated by that proportion of it which actuates their public councils, or even by the detail of their civil government. Yet that government is certainly, in one reſpect, well conſtituted, that calls abilities and diſtinguiſhed worth into public view. Sir

William

William Temple has pronounced this eulogium on the conſtitution of the United Provinces of Holland, though rather at the expence of the national character. "Though perhaps the nation, ſays that "writer, generally be not wiſe, yet the go"vernment is, becauſe it is compoſed of the "wiſeſt of the nation, which may give it "an advantage over many others, where "abiſity is of more common growth, but "of leſs uſe to the public, if it happens "that neither wiſdom nor honeſty are the "qualities which bring men to the manage"ment of ſtate affairs, as they uſually do "in this commonwealth." It is, however, no ſmall point of wiſdom to diſtinguiſh ſuperior worth; and the men who are diſpoſed to regard with juſt admiration noble talents, are inferior only to the men who poſſeſs them.

But it may be queſtioned, whether the happieſt periods, even of free governments,

are the periods moſt conducive to the perfections of mankind. Perhaps the higheſt national, as well as private virtue, is bred in the ſchool of adverſity. A nation certainly may derive ſplendour from thoſe very circumſtances which ſink the character of its citizens. The ſcience of mechanics, which is the glory of human reaſon, has enlarged the abilities, and dignified the aſpect of nations. Yet the lower claſſes of artizans and manufacturers, in moſt of the civilized governments of modern Europe, who are ſo inſtrumental in promoting public opulence and commercial proſperity, may be pronounced to be themſelves in a ſtate of intellectual debaſement, to which there is ſcarce any parallel in the hiſtory of rude barbarians. It is active and progreſſive virtue; it is refinement of manners, or vigour of ſentiment, and the habits of intellectual exertion, which confer real honour on families; it is the more general and diffuſive influence of ſimilar habits, that exalts

alts a people in a moral light, and enriches their genius for generations to come.

But the genius of man is ſo flexible, ſo open to impreſſions from without, ſo ſuſceptible of early culture, that between hereditary, innate, and acquired propenſities, it is hard to draw the line of diſtinction. It were neceſſary that the natives of one country ſhould be bred up and educated, from their earlieſt infancy, among the natives of another, in order to make fair experiments with regard to original talents. Under ſuch circumſtances, individuals are occaſionally preſented to view. A Theban may be bred at Athens, an Athenian in Bœotia. And, if whole tribes of mankind could be placed in ſimilar ſituations, we might then indeed contemplate them in their innate, as well as in their acquired characteriſtics, obſerve the one mingling with, or checked by the other, and mark,

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in a variety of combinations, their accumulated influence. Qualities, however, that reſiſt for ages the change of government and of climate, muſt be allowed to be congenial and hereditary to the tribes among whom they are found to predominate.

Perhaps the hiſtory of the Jews furniſhes an example of a race, whoſe peculiar qualities, thus circumſtanced, have deſcended through a long courſe of generations. No people, it may be affirmed, have ever figured on the theatre of nations, with a deſtiny as ſingular as theirs. Their hiſtory, whether drawn from ſacred or profane records, whether regarded as miraculous, or in the order of nature, affords matter of abundant ſpeculation. The maxims of their religion and policy preſerved them in all the revolutions of fortune, as a diſtinct people. After the final diſſolution

diſſolution of their government, and diſperſion all over the habitable globe, a ſyſtem of prejudices peculiar to themſelves, but directed, in its operations, to fulfil the ends of Providence, has preſerved their genealogy, and prevented alliances or intermarriages with any other race. Certain marks of uniformity are accordingly diſcernible among them in every period. The ſame ſpirit which was ſo untractable under their own governors, diſpoſed them to mutiny and rebellion when a Roman province; and that perverſeneſs of temper, which led them ſo often to apoſtacy and to idolatry, when in poſſeſſion of the true faith, has rendered them tenacious of a falſe religion. As numerous, perhaps, at this day, as when a ſettled nation, the relation of conſanguinity, under all the various governments and climates where their lot is caſt, marks their character. Yet, had this inſociable people remained in their antient poſſeſſions,

poſſeſſions, and, without foreign connections or intermarriages, had ſubſiſted under the ſame political eſtabliſhment, the moſt ſingular, ſurely, that ever was formed, the lineaments of their character, both of inward and outward form, had, we may well believe, been ſtill more ſtrongly defined. In general it may be obſerved, that the confined intercourſe of the ſpecies tends ultimately to the formation of a peculiar genius and temper. Thus, in the antient Germans, the uniformity of individuals was as aſtoniſhing as the diverſity of all from every other people; and, from the ſingularity of theſe appearances, the Roman hiſtorian ſuppoſes them a pure and diſtinct race, not derived from Aſia, from Africa, from Italy, or from any other region *.

The new hemiſphere preſented appearances exactly ſimilar. The aſtoniſhing re-

* Tacit. de Mor. Germ.

ſemblance

ſemblance which was there obſerved among mankind, ſeems to evidence that it was peopled originally by the ſame race, and at an æra of no high antiquity. The branches, though widely ſpread, had probably not been long ſeparated from the common ſtock; or perhaps a ſimilarity in the modes of life contributed, more than any other cauſe, throughout that immenſe continent, to exclude variety in the human ſpecies.

The hiſtory of Indoſtan, where the *Aborigines* are ſo clearly defined from the other natives of the ſame regions, might be mentioned as another ſtriking example of a genius and conſtitution which conſanguinity has in part contributed to cheriſh and preſerve for ages.

When emigrants from different countries, fixed in one ſettlement, and under one political œconomy, preſerve, however, for a length

length of time, diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics, the diverſity cannot be altogether aſcribed to circumſtances poſterior to birth. The temper of the Britiſh nation, which is attributed by ſome writers to local ſituation, flouriſhes with equal vigour in another hemiſphere. The ſpirit which now animates American councils, was the ſpirit of Britons in a former age; and the Britons, in the ſame province, are diſtinguiſhable from every other tribe. The concourſe of ſo many tribes proved, in the Britiſh colonies, a fertile ſource of animoſity and diſſenſion; and unfortunate, ſurely, was that policy in the parent ſtate, which could ſo far ſubdue the antipathies, and reconcile the prejudices of ſo mixed a people, as to unite them in one general confederacy againſt her government. Yet perhaps this temporary and precarious union may diſſolve apace; the ſeeds of internal diſcord may revive; and their mutual jealouſies, if not controuled

trouled by ſuperior wiſdom, may one day ſhake the foundations of this riſing empire, or reunite it to the Britiſh goverament.

But were all memorials of theſe ſettlements reſcinded from modern annals, there might be obſerved for ages to come, conſtitutional diſtinctions in the ſame province, where the greater number, from conſtitutional reſemblances, might boaſt of one lineage with Britons. Yet, theſe reſemblances, and thoſe diſtinctions, time muſt annihilate. And, from a new order of things, there muſt finally ariſe that peculiar aſſociation of qualities, which is properly called national, as diſtinguiſhing a people long under the ſame phyſical and moral œconomy, from the reſt of the world.

Much latitude, however, is allowed in the genius and character of every people, without violation of the general law. What

variety

variety among children of the ſame parents, do we obſerve to conſiſt with a family reſemblance? Conſiſtent, in the ſame manner, with family characteriſtics, is a certain national uniformity; and conſiſtent with national characteriſtics, are the eſſentials of a common nature, and a common deſcent. Such varieties ought not to create antipathies, or unhinge, or even relax the ſocial ties. On the contrary, if it hold in man, that croſſing the brood tends occaſionally to improvement, this conſideration, which forms a natural argument againſt inceſt, ſo juſtly prohibited on political and moral grounds by all civilized and enlightened governments, authoriſes and invites all nations to form mutual connexions and alliances.

Thus we may obſerve mankind, eſſentially the ſame, yet in different regions of the globe, varying continually from a fixed ſtandard;

ſtandard; breathing at firſt, if I may uſe the expreſſion, unequal proportions of the ætherial ſpirit; excelling in the rational, in the moral, or in the animal powers; born with a ſuperior fitneſs for refinement, for arts, for civil culture; or caſt in a rougher mould, and by native temper more indocile and wild. Yet all the capital diſtinctions in individuals, families or tribes, flow from cauſes ſubſequent to birth; from education, example, forms of government; from the order of internal laws, from the maxims and genius of religion, from the lights of ſcience and philoſophy; in ſome degree from the infallible operations of the external elements; but above all, from the free determinations of the will. To run the parallel of nations, and decide on their comparative perfections, were a deſign too aſpiring for the Author of theſe Eſſays; yet the appearances in civil life we may pronounce to be often deluſive. The

manners,

manners, the crimes of illiterate ſavage tribes are apt enough to appear to us in their full dimenſion and deformity; but the violations of natural law among civilized nations have a ſolemn varniſh of policy, which diſguiſes the enormity of guilt. The greatneſs too of a community dazzles the eye, and confers an imaginary value on its members. It eclipſes the milder luſtre of more humble tribes. Yet the virtue of nations, as of individuals, frequently courts the ſhade, and the beautiful figure of the poet is equally applicable to both:

Full many a flower is born to bluſh unſeen,
And waſte its ſweetneſs on the deſert air.

Hiſtory, which ought to be the miſtreſs of human life, affects magnificence, and ſeems to deſcend from her dignity in recording the tranſactions of little States. She forgets that men may grow leſs by elevation, and permits

permits the honours of nations to be diſtributed by the hands of fortune. It is hence the Greeks and Romans are regarded by us, with a veneration ſo far above all the nations of antiquity. Hence Europe, in modern times, boaſts a pre-eminence that ſeems to inſult the reſt of the world.

It belongs to reaſon and philoſophy to re-judge mankind; and, under an endleſs variety of appearances, more or leſs equivocal, to obſerve and fix the principles which affect, in every age and country, the proportion of human happineſs, and of human perfection. Let not nations then, or individuals, regard themſelves as ſingle in the creation; let them view their intereſts on the largeſt ſcale; let them feel the importance of their ſtation to themſelves and to the ſyſtem; to their contemporaries, and to future generations; and learn, from the eſtabliſhed order of ſecond

cauſes,

cauſes, to reſpect, to adorn, and to exalt the ſpecies.

Nor is the detail of the meaneſt tribes unimportant in philoſophy. If human nature is liable to degenerate, it is capable of proportionable improvement from the collected wiſdom of ages. It is pleaſant to infer, from the actual progreſs of ſociety, the glorious poſſibilities of human excellence. And, if the principles can be aſſembled into view, which moſt directly tend to diverſify the genius and character of nations, ſome theory may be raiſed on theſe foundations, that ſhall account more ſyſtematically for paſt occurrences, and afford ſome openings and anticipations into the eventual hiſtory of the world.

THE END.